



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

ANDOVER-HARVARD LIBRARY



AH 5NNJ B



120. Theol
682 Flint James

Theological School
IN
HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

— ♦ —
BEQUEST OF
Rev. RICHARD MANNING HODGES,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

RECEIVED OCTOBER 23, 1878.

0

A

PRESENT FROM A PASTOR

TO HIS YOUNG PARISHIONERS:

In Ten Discourses;

URGING UPON THEM AN

EARLY AND EARNEST ATTENTION TO RELIGION.

BY JAMES FLINT, D. D.

BOSTON:
WILLIAM CROSBY

118 Washington Street
1844.



**Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1844,
by William Crosby, in the Clerk's Office of the District
Court of Massachusetts.**

**A. J. WRIGHT, PRINTER,
3 Water Street.**

CONTENTS.

DISCOURSE I.

	PAGE.
A BRIEF STATEMENT OF SOME OF THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY. - - -	1

JOHN XX. 29. *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed.*

DISCOURSE II.

RELIGION NECESSARY TO YOUTH AND TO ALL ERAS AND CONDITIONS OF LIFE. - - -	50
---	----

1 KINGS XVIII. 25. *But I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth.*

DISCOURSE III.

CONSIDERATIONS THAT ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THE YOUNG AS MOTIVES TO EARLY RELIGION. - - -	77
---	----

ECCLESIASTES. XII. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*

DISCOURSE IV.

CONSIDERATIONS THAT ADDRESS THEMSELVES
TO THE YOUNG, &c. CONTINUED. - - - 104

ECCLESIASTES XII. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, whilst the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.

DISCOURSE V.

A MARK SET UPON THREE VICES FOR THE RE-
PROBATION AND AVOIDANCE OF THE YOUNG. 155

PROV. VIII. 32. Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children; for blessed are they that keep my ways.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE YOUNG CAUTIONED AGAINST THE SEDUC-
TIONS OF ILLICIT PLEASURE AND SKEPTI-
CISM IN RELIGION. - - - 188

ECCLESIASTES XI. 9. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine own heart, and in the sight of thine own eyes. But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

DISCOURSE VII.

THE YOUNG EXHORTED TO BE SOBER-MINDED. 219

TITUS II. 6. Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded.

DISCOURSE VIII.

GOD DESTROYS OUR EARTHLY HOPES TO MAKE
US APPRECIATE THE HOPE AND LIVE AS BE-
COMES THE HEIRS OF IMMORTALITY. - - 246

JOB XIV. 19. *Thou destroyest the hope of man.*

DISCOURSE IX.

THE VOICE OF NATURE IN AUTUMN. - - 271

PSALMS XXXIX. 14. *And their beauty shall consume in
the grave.*

DISCOURSE X.

CHARACTER OF TIMOTHY PICKERING, A MOD-
EL FOR THE YOUNG POLITICIANS OF OUR
COUNTRY. - - - - - 297

DEUTERONOMY XXX. 7. *His eye was not dim nor his nat-
ural force abated.*

PREFACE.

THE discourses contained in this little volume were written without a thought of printing them. With the exception of the first and the last, they were composed and delivered, as occasions called them forth in the ordinary routine of the writer's ministrations from the pulpit. The substance of the first was delivered in Harvard University chapel, as the Dudleian Lecture, and the last upon an occasion of which the discourse itself speaks. There is some repetition of topics in the intermediate discourses. The nature and effects of early habits are several times adverted to; and the writer thought of leaving out portions of some of the discourses to avoid these repetitions. But finding that the remarks and illustrations relating to the same topics were for the most

part different in expression or bearing, and perceiving that leaving out these portions would make unseemly chasms, it was thought best to let them remain as originally written.

The author would not have it understood, that he has selected these discourses from the mass of his manuscripts, as affording the best specimens of his pulpit addresses either in respect to the subject matter or literary execution. He has chosen them because he thought he might do more good by thus addressing the young, than by any thing he could say to the mature. They have nothing to do with the disputes or speculations of the day ; no reference to dogmas or creeds ; and have nothing in them exclusive or sectarian. They are altogether practical, and are founded upon principles and considerations that appeal to our common humanity and upon the universally admitted truths of our common christianity.

If they were written without a thought of printing, it may be asked, why are they printed ? It has been long the writer's intention to comply with a request made him, by some of the young persons of the society with which he was connected during the earliest years of his ministry, that he would furnish them with

some printed memorials of that ministry. He now fulfills that intention. He makes this his present to the young, who are children of the once young, to whom some of these discourses were addressed. He has placed at the end the character of Timothy Pickering, as a model for the young citizens of our country to imitate, and that while they survey his character they may learn, what, it is to be feared, they can not learn from any living examples, that there may be such a thing as undeviating political integrity and perfectly disinterested patriotism through a long series of years and in a great variety of the most responsible public offices, amidst the most violent conflicts and momentous revolutions of parties.

JAN. 1844.

To the young members of the Society
with which he was first connected, and those of his
present charge, these Discourses
are affectionately Inscribed
by the Author.

A

PRESENT FROM A PASTOR.

DISCOURSE I.

PART I.

BRIEF STATEMENT OF SOME OF THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

AMIDST the wild speculations that tend to unsettle every thing and settle nothing, there is no object more worthy to engage the attention of the young, when of an age to think and inquire for themselves, than a sober and dispassionate examination of the evidences of the divine origin and authority of the religion, the institutions of which they are called upon to support, and, from Sabbath to Sabbath, are

exhorted to make its precepts the guide of their lives, and its promises the foundation of their hopes for eternity. I can conceive of no attainment more desirable and important for the young, than an early and settled belief in the truth of the Christian revelation, founded upon rational and enlightened conviction. To state some of the principal facts and reasons, which have produced this conviction in the minds of the wisest and best of men, in every successive generation in all Christian countries since the first promulgation of this religion, is the object of the following discourse.

John, xx: 29.—*Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* [The sense of the original in the last clause, may be more correctly expressed thus,—*happy they, who having never seen, shall nevertheless believe.*]

It was the peculiar fortune of a small number of our fellow men, including the disciple whom our Lord addressed, as in the text, to be eye and ear witnesses of the acts and discourses during his ministry, and of the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, who claimed to be a teacher, specially endowed and commissioned by God, the long predicted and earnestly expected Messiah of the remarkable people, to whom, when the fullness of time had come, he was sent. Upon the recorded testimony of these eye and ear witnesses to what *they had heard, and to what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon, and their hands had handled of the word of life*, we and all who have professed themselves Christians since their time, rest our faith in the religion, which we gratefully receive as a revelation from God, a supernatural communication of his will and

gracious purposes respecting the present duties and future destination of his human offspring.

That it is possible that the evidences of the truth of the evangelical history, addressed to our reason, can be as convincing and satisfactory to us, as the evidences addressed to the senses of the original witnesses were to them, no one, I presume, will take upon him seriously to affirm. And the feeling is natural, which all, who have reflected upon the subject, have sometimes experienced, and many have expressed, that those who have to rely upon the testimony of the original witnesses, are less favored than these witnesses in a matter of the deepest interest and of the highest moment to their virtue and happiness.

But if we view the matter rightly, it will appear that this circumstance puts a talent into our hands, from which we may derive a moral advantage over the

original witnesses. Their faith had no virtue in itself, as they were situated ; it was an involuntary act of the mind. The evidence was irresistible. There was therefore no more merit in believing, than there is in seeing, when the light of day is poured upon the organ of vision. In all cases of sensible evidence, as of mathematical, or demonstrative proof, assent or faith, is an involuntary act of the mind, to which is attached no other merit than that of being affected according to an unalterable law of our nature. But when our assent is required to a proposition, which, if once admitted to be true, lays us under acknowledged obligation to suppress every evil or corrupt affection or disposition, to correct vicious habits if we have them, to elevate the character, to conform the temper and conduct to an exalted standard of piety and morals, assent or faith in such case, indicates a better disposition, conveys the idea of superior

candor and fairness, of more approvable qualities of mind, when it is yielded to a reasonable degree of evidence, which may yet admit of dispute and plausible objection, than when it is surrendered to overwhelming proof, to absolute demonstration, or as in the case of the original witnesses, to the evidence of the senses.

The apostles and primitive disciples, could not do otherwise than they did, viz : believe and act accordingly after the proofs they had seen and heard and felt of the Messiahship of Jesus, of the supernatural authority, with which he spoke and acted, and of the divine power by which he was proved to be the Son of God, in his resurrection from the dead and in the subsequent effusion of the Spirit upon them, according to his promise.

The evidences which challenge *our* faith in Christ or Christianity are ad-

dressed to our reason. They do not carry irresistible conviction to the mind; they do not, like the evidences exhibited to the senses, as well as the reason of the apostles, preclude the possibility of doubt or incredulity. They require to be examined and weighed. They are not forced upon our attention; we must turn our attention to them. They demand exemption from prejudice and passion, and corrupt propensities,—in a word,—seriousness and fairness of mind, in order to produce their proper effect, and to secure assent to the facts and doctrines of Christianity, and thus to establish faith upon the sure basis of enlightened and rational conviction. There is, consequently, scope and opportunity for the exercise of moral qualities in the affair of faith, in yielding or withholding assent. If “men easily believe what they wish may be true,” the converse of the aphorism is as often exemplified in their believ-

ing with difficulty, or refusing to believe at all, what they wish may not be true. If then a man believes the divine origin and authority of Christianity, which belief necessarily involves the concession that he is bound to make its moral precepts the rule of his life, to be ever aiming and striving to live the Heavenly and Divine life of Jesus, and to be pure, as the author and finisher of his faith is pure,—if he thus believes upon the strength of a reasonable degree of evidence in favor of this religion, upon evidence not amounting to certainty, but having a preponderance of probabilities on its side,—this man shows that he is disposed to virtue and to piety,—that he is not afraid, or averse to find the Christian revelation true,—that his prevailing sentiments and dispositions, are on the side of religion and goodness. There is manifested in this man's faith something indicative of a better mind, of better moral qualities

than we should recognize in the belief of another, who yielded his assent to the truth of this same religion not till he was in a manner compelled to it by an overwhelming degree of evidence, such as that which Thomas insisted on, the evidence of the senses, or that which alone can equal it, mathematical demonstration. In the latter case, there is strong indication of some sinister interest or inclination, some faulty temper or habit, or a perversity of will, that must be sacrificed or corrected, if he admits Christianity to be true, and which, swaying the mind toward the part of unbelief and irreligion, gives a strong bias to its decisions upon all subjects of a moral nature, and especially that of a religion, which, in the name of a righteous God, inculcates righteousness and piety, and proclaims a future retribution, *that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.*

This may account for the unbelief of most men, by whom Christianity has been rejected, who were capable of examining and judging of the evidences it exhibits of a miraculous origin. Mistaking also for Christianity what in no sense belongs to it, the corruptions, and absurd dogmas which have borne the name of Christianity, has, no doubt, made many intelligent and virtuous men unbelievers. There may be other causes of unbelief, which imply no moral obliquity or blame. But for the most part the incredulous have arrayed themselves against Christianity, as a divine revelation, because they have felt that its purity and opposition to all evil is against them, and because it requires the sacrifice of what they are not willing to part with, or the performance of what they are not willing to do.

These observations may serve to illustrate the sentiment of the text, *blessed are*

they that have not seen and yet have believed; as if our Lord had said, "happy they who shall have received the gospel I have proclaimed as true, and shall have obeyed the truth in the love of it, upon the strength of that kind, and degree of evidence, which shall be hereafter afforded to men, who can not have that of their senses, as thou, Thomas, hast had." If the evidences of divine revelation were greater and more obvious than they are, they would so far preclude the voluntary exercise of our powers, as to leave no room for good or bad dispositions to manifest themselves in believing or not believing. There could be no ground for ascribing to faith, as the Scriptures uniformly do, any moral worth whatever, or to unbelief any moral blame or demerit. There could indeed be no unbelief, if the evidence were such as supposed, i. e. not liable to objection, or to be called in question.

The reason is hence apparent why, as beings in a state of trial and moral discipline, endowed with practical free-will and powers to be exercised, in order to their improvement and perfection, God has given to men only such kind and degrees of evidence, as we find, of his own existence and moral government, and of his extraordinary interpositions, particularly of that last and greatest by his supernaturally endowed Son and Messenger Jesus Christ, for the recovery of mankind from the ignorance, depravity and misery, in which they were early involved, and for their elevation and advancement towards his own moral *likeness in knowledge and righteousness and true holiness.*

Although for the above-mentioned reasons, the evidences of the truth of the evangelical history or of Christianity, are such as may be gainsayed and resisted by men of intelligence, that have their mo-

tives for wishing it may not be true, they are sufficient, when duly examined and weighed, to satisfy every unprejudiced inquirer, who is competent to judge of their validity.

In support of this position, I now proceed to offer a few of the almost numberless considerations which might be adduced as proofs, and which may be found amply detailed and argued with great strength of reasoning, in the learned and voluminous treatises, that have been written in defence of our religion, and in reply to the arguments and objections of unbelievers.

The credibility of the evangelical history, or of Christianity, rests upon the existence of undoubted and undeniable facts, for the existence of which no adequate cause can be assigned in the known principles of the human mind and constitution, or in the ordinary powers and operations of nature, and can therefore

be satisfactorily accounted for only by ascribing them to a supernatural cause, to the miraculous interposition of the Author of Nature, who alone is able to control, to suspend, or vary its operations and laws at pleasure. The controversy then, between the believer and the impugner of revelation, when brought to a point, is virtually a conflict of opposite miracles. They are at issue as to which have the best title to be believed from all the history and phenomena of the universe and of man. For the Christian miracles, the advocate of revelation can assign an adequate cause and reason ; for the facts that must be miracles, if the Christian miracles are not true, his opponent can assign no satisfactory cause or reason whatever. Thus the principal evidences of Divine revelation may be reduced to a succession of dilemmas, presenting a choice of alternatives, to one or the other of which, every mind

must assent, or remain in utter skepticism in respect to every thing that does not fall under the immediate cognizance of the senses. A host of able defenders of Christianity, have abundantly shown that the probabilities in favor of the reality of the Christian miracles, exceedingly over-balance all that has been advanced by infidel writers to disprove their reality.

For illustration of the principle here stated, I will now offer to the consideration of the reader, several dilemmas, or alternatives, to which, as I have said, the principal evidences of the Christian revelation may be reduced.

I. It is a fact, attested, and put beyond all dispute by undoubted documents, Pagan as well as Christian, that great numbers not only of Christians, but Jews and Heathen, "gave unquestionable testimony, some expressly, and others by indirect circumstances, as history informs us, to the miracles said to be performed

by Christ and his apostles, upon the human body ; " such as giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, making whole, withered or maimed limbs, healing instantly diseases of long continuance, restoring reason to the insane, and raising the dead to life. Now we have the best possible evidence that we can have for any historical fact, that great numbers believed as fully as they believed in their own existence, that they saw with their own eyes these miracles performed. In consequence of these miracles, because the common people were led by them to receive Jesus as the expected Messiah, the rulers and chief men of the Jews, who opposed the pretensions of Jesus, took counsel how they might destroy him. Others adhered the more firmly to him. The multitude on account of his miracles, would have taken him by force, and made him their king. The miracles were of such notoriety, and so noised abroad,

that the diseased were brought to him whenever he entered a village that he might heal them.

After his death and resurrection, the apostles everywhere testified that they saw these miracles crowned by that most momentous one of all, the resurrection of Jesus himself, who showed himself alive to his disciples, by many infallible proofs, for the space of forty days, during which interval he repeatedly met and conversed and partook of food with his disciples, and finally leading them from the city, to a neighboring village, ascended up on high out of their sight. The apostles afterwards were endowed, as he had promised them, with power to work miracles in his name. They are reported to have wrought many miracles. And multitudes in consequence, believed their testimony respecting Jesus. They make these miracles a ground of appeal to the churches which they had gathered

in proof of their apostleship, which churches must have believed that they saw these miracles, or no such appeal would have been made.

I might multiply almost without limit, the circumstances which go to prove, that not only the apostles, but multitudes, alike the friends and enemies of Jesus, believed that they saw him perform the miracles ascribed to him,—that the apostles afterwards were conscious of a power accompanying them of working miracles,—that their converts believed they saw these miracles,—that others in great numbers, as well as the apostles, were actuated in all their proceedings in respect to Christianity, by a uniform conviction of the reality of these miracles.

We are to recollect that those who were not convinced of the Divine mission of Jesus, never denied the reality of the miracles. They ascribed them to the agency of demons. Their testimony is

therefore more decisive if possible than that of the disciples of Jesus, as to the reality of the miracles. Their reality was never called in question by the opposers of Christianity, till a better philosophy taught them that they could not have been effected but by the immediate interposition of the Author of nature. When the idea of magic or demoniacal agency was exploded, it became the last resort of unbelief, to deny that any miracles were performed.

No historical fact, then, is better authenticated, than that great numbers believed that they saw the miracles ascribed to Jesus and his apostles, really performed before their eyes. The objection to these miracles is, that they are a deviation from the uniform tenor or laws of nature, and are therefore to be rejected. Here then is presented the dilemma, or choice of conflicting miracles. It is equally a deviation from the well-known and uniform tenor of the intelligent nature of man, or from all

that is known of the laws and operations of the human mind,—is as great a miracle as any said to have been wrought upon the human body, that such numbers alike of the enemies and friends of Jesus and his apostles, should in their different ways, have borne unequivocal testimony to these miracles, unless they had been really performed. If the recorded miracles of the New Testament are a violation of physical order or analogy, the belief and report of these miracles, maintained under circumstances, which proved beyond the possibility of doubt, the conviction of the witnesses, as to the truth of what they reported,—maintained, as they were, by the apostles, at the sacrifice of every earthly good, and of life itself;—this their belief and testimony, if no such miracles were wrought, would be a violation of moral order, of mental analogy, as great and palpable, as the recorded miracles are of physical analogy.

Between these conflicting miracles the believer thinks that he decides rationally in favor of the miracles recorded by the Evangelists. They are in perfect consistency with all his best ideas of the character, providence and moral government of God,—of his paternal interest and concern for the instruction and improvement of his children. They were wrought to authenticate the Divine mission of Jesus,—to prove that he was a messenger sent by God, and thus to sanction the lessons of Divine wisdom, the truths and informations of such a moral teacher, exemplar and revealer of immortality, as the world needed. They were fitted to *accomplish* the ends for which they were wrought, viz. to awaken attention to Christ's instructions, and to prove that he taught with authority from God ;—and, in whatever possible light they are viewed, they appear worthy of the wisdom and goodness of the Being whose

extraordinary interposition they attested. The unbeliever by adopting the opposite alternative has to acquiesce, if he can, in the monstrous supposition that "God confounded the understandings, affections and whole train of associations of many human beings, so that while they appear to have been influenced and actuated in all other things in a manner like all other men, in respect to the history of Jesus, and its consequences, acted in a manner repugnant to all our ideas and experiences."*

II. Again ; if an absurdity so extravagant may bear to be named, admit that no such men, events or transactions, as those we read of in the Scriptures, ever had a being, the existence of the Scriptures themselves would be a miracle as great as any recorded in them. They can be proved to have been written by

* See Dr. Hartley's work on man. Of the truth of the Christian Religion.

many different individuals existing under very different circumstances, and removed some of them by the distance of many centuries from each other. The most cursory reader of these Scriptures cannot help perceiving a uniformity of design, manifesting itself from the first to the last. What is written in one age is interpreted and confirmed in another and distant age, by the occurrence of events, of which the writer could not possibly have had any knowledge from human foresight, that they were to be, or that what he was writing could have any reference to, or receive illustration from their occurrence. All this can be proved as clearly as any other historical facts, and in the same way.

Now that all these writers, called prophets, evangelists and apostles, who lived, several of them, some thousand years apart, were all impostors, agreed without knowing it in imposing the most

glorious and delightful cheat of so divine a religion upon mankind, as is contained in these Scriptures, would imply a much more stupendous and incredible miracle, than that these writers recorded truly and simply what was dictated and accomplished by the supernatural influence and interposition of an Almighty and All-ruling Spirit, *who worketh all in all after the counsels of his own will, and who alone can see and declare the end from the beginning.* The unbeliever by denying the authenticity of the Scriptures, and affirming them to be a series of fictitious narratives, and of human precepts and speculations, is pressed equally in this alternative by his grand difficulty, the supernatural that so manifestly pervades them, all uniformly agreeing in one aim and tendency, viz. the gradual introduction and ultimate establishment of a perfect religion in the world. He is still compelled to admit the existence of facts

or effects evidently surpassing all that the natural powers and ordinary operations of the human mind have been known to achieve, and, therefore, in the proper sense, miraculous, or supernatural. From this admission there appears to be no escape but in the denial of all testimony and historical evidence, however transmitted,—i. e. in utter skepticism.

PART II.

III. This point will derive additional illustration, and the argument new force from a brief consideration of the character of the religion, to the promulgation and establishment of which all the extraordinary and miraculous agents, events and transactions, of which we read in the Scriptures, were either preparatory, or immediately conducive. The signal marks of a Divine origin, which the character of Christianity bears in all its principal features, present to the unbeliever

a difficulty, of which no satisfactory solution can be given upon the supposition that it is solely a work of man's device. The books containing this religion can be proved by an accumulation of evidence to have been in existence substantially the same as they have come down to us, within the same century in which the events are said to have occurred, and the doctrines to have been delivered, of which they purport to be a faithful history and record. We are sufficiently acquainted from other sources with the learning and philosophy, the theology and religions, the morality and intellectual progress of the age, and particularly of the singular people of that country, in which Christianity and its author had their origin.

Every honest mind, competent to form a judgment upon the subject, upon due examination, discovers in the character and instructions of Jesus, that is, in

Christianity,—for they are inseparably associated in our minds,—an originality, a simple majesty and grandeur of ideas,—a purity and elevation of moral sentiment,—a model of practical goodness,—a spirituality and sublimity, a parental and impartial tenderness for his human offspring, an indescribable union of the venerable and attractive in the representations given of the divine character,—a rational, spiritual and simple worship of God, as our Father, enjoined and exemplified,—a universal benevolence inculcated and practiced,—a humility united with dignity,—a meekness without meanness,—a morality founded upon the government of the thoughts and the suppression of the first rise and stir of vicious desire in the heart,—a perfection, in short, and harmony of virtues, to which no approach had been made in idea, much less in practice, by the philosophers and wise men of the age. We see Jesus, without having had access to any extraordinary

external means of knowledge, of humble origin and obscure life, till he appeared in the character of a public teacher specially commissioned by God;—we see this moral wonder, this more than sage, dispensing his sublime lessons, confounding the learned scribes and lawyers with his reasoning, silencing his adversaries with his answers to their insidious questions, to their amazement replying to their thoughts, which they supposed they had effectually concealed. No wonder we hear the people exclaim, *whence hath this man all this wisdom having never learned?*

The doctrines which he taught bear no marks of having originated from any of the schools or systems, which man's wisdom had devised. They are untinctured with the prejudices, the spirit, the opinions, or any of the characteristic features of the age or country, in which they were delivered. They furnish to their

disciples all the principles of unlimited improvement and happiness, having respect to man equally as an individual and as united to his species in all the diversified relations of the social state. They are adapted to all men in all conditions, of all countries and all ages. They contain a prospective provision for the highest conceivable advancement and refinement of the human powers and of human society. And yet the most peculiar feature, perhaps, by which this religion is distinguished from all the religions or superstitions, which then existed in the world, is its distinct and authoritative annunciation of a future life, and especially the nature of the rewards, or rather of the happiness of the heaven, which it promises to its obedient disciples.

The fancied heaven of paganism resembled in character the sensual and unholy rites of its idolatrous worship. It was in all nations a heaven of earthly

occupations, distinctions and pleasures, such as accorded with the habits and tastes of beings in bondage to their appetites and passions. There was nothing in it allied in the remotest degree to the pure and spiritual character and sanctity of those devout joys, that intimate union of congenial minds, that perfection of love and wisdom, and knowledge, and blessedness, which enter into our idea of the Christian heaven. In short the heaven of Christians, which is a state resulting mainly from the virtues and affections which constitute the Christian character, bears no resemblance to any thing that had been previously conceived of the future condition of man. The invention of such a religion, i. e. of such a character, as that of Jesus, and of the doctrines and instructions ascribed to him, bearing such evident marks of a wisdom and a perfection of goodness, so manifestly surpassing all that the wisest and best men had at-

tained to by their own ~~unaided~~ powers,—in all respects so distinct and alien from the spirit, institutions, opinions and character of the age and country, in which this religion and its author had their origin,—the invention of all this, I say, if the whole were a fiction, supposes an intellectual phenomenon, a moral miracle, as inexplicable upon the ordinary principles or laws, which govern and limit the powers of the human mind, and as repugnant to the general experience of mankind, as raising a dead man to life, or calming a tempest with a word. The only cause, which our unbiased reason can assign, as adequate to the production of such results, of such a being so endowed as Jesus, living such a life, giving to the world such a religion, must be found in the *Father of lights*, and “Lord of all power and might,” who gave his spirit without measure to the author of this religion, and to whom Jesus uniform-

ly ascribes all his supernatural endowments, and all the wisdom and excellence of his doctrines.

IV. Once more ; admit the character of Jesus and his religion to have been the invention of twelve men, who called themselves his disciples and apostles, the subsequent progress of this fiction is to be accounted for, opposed as it was by all the interests, vices and prejudices, and still more, by the established superstitions of every people, and these interwoven with all their civil transactions, their amusements, every important enterprise and event in life, every solemn incident of home, and even their daily repasts. And add to this, the wit, and learning, and philosophy, and the civil authorities every where arrayed against this new faith and its propagators. That the first preachers of this faith, instead of meeting aid and encouragement from these sources, met only the most unquali-

fied hostility in every form, and endured incredible hardships and sufferings, and finally a cruel death for their testimony to the truth of the facts and doctrines, which they announced, is attested by a cloud of unexceptionable witnesses, heathen as well as Christian. There is also the same evidence that nevertheless, in defiance of all these obstacles, in the face of an opposing world, this new faith every where found proselytes, *and multitudes both of men and women were added daily*; "so that within about thirty years after the first Christian discourse was preached in Jerusalem, a few days subsequent to the declared ascension of the author of this faith, the gospel had spread and continued to be embraced by increasing numbers, not only throughout almost all parts of the Roman empire, but even in Parthia and India." Its subsequent progress till it became the religion of the then civilized world is sufficiently known.

If the first successful propagation of Christianity against all conceivable obstacles, and its final triumph over paganism throughout the vast empire of the Cæsars do not prove that it had what it professes to have had, the immediate agency of God, i. e. the supernatural aid of miracles, then we have a stupendous effect without a cause; for no other cause has been, or, as we think, can be assigned, in any measure proportioned and adequate to so mighty and thorough a revolution in the principles, worship, manners, morals, and entire character, not of an obscure community or clan, but of entire nations and empires. When we see this religion, which was a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to the cultivated Greeks, and hostile to the ruling passions and interests of the leading men of the age, at open and irreconcilable variance with the established opinions and most sacred usages of every people;—

when we see this religion in the hands of a few plain, obscure, powerless, and, if we except Paul and perhaps Luke, uneducated men, working its way like leaven in a mass of kneaded flour, while its publishers and their disciples were every where opposed, and harrassed; and punished;—when we see it against such formidable odds, proselyting a majority of the gentile world, subduing their pride of science, their vain philosophy and their vices,—subverting all their ancient opinions, their inveterate prejudices, their superstitions, their temples and their gods, we are constrained to acknowledge that nothing short of the interposition of a Divine hand could have effected all this; *and if this counsel or this work had been of men and not of God, it would have come to naught.*

V. The beneficial effects, which have accompanied and still accompany the knowledge and reception of this religion,

furnish a strong presumptive proof of its Divine origin. It has wrought the most important changes in the intellectual and moral condition of every people among whom it has been established and taught, even with the lamentable accompaniment and debasing alloy of human admixtures, that have been every where dispensed with it. It is *the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, our Lord*, the informations and discoveries, the *truth and grace*, the *spirit of love and of a sound mind*, which he has communicated in the gospel that have raised the human character to an elevation of moral purity, integrity and intellectual dignity, and especially called forth a spirit and expansiveness of philanthropy, a diffusive charity and compassionate regard for the poor and distressed, the ignorant and enslaved, the fallen and forsaken of the world, to which the most civilized nations without this religion never made the most distant ap-

proach either in example or in idea. Christianity as it introduced, where it was received with any degree of intelligence, a radical change with respect to the principles of human conduct, by presenting new and higher objects than this world offers to human desire, proposing instead of *the things that are seen and temporal*, the rewards of a future eternal life, as the only worthy and ultimate end, for which its disciples should live and act, and suffer here *with patient continuance in well doing*, in this way greatly changed the aspect and character of society. It has infused a spirit of mildness and humanity into the laws and policy of nations, —softened the ferocity of war, and abolished many cruel usages. While it has exerted this general meliorating influence upon the nations of Christendom, multitudes without number in the private walks of life have been guided and formed to piety and virtue by its precepts, and

have died rejoicing in its promises. By exalting the female character, it has imparted to domestic life its best joys, and has rendered home, the fireside of a Christian and well ordered family, the best emblem of the mansions which await the righteous in our Father's house in heaven, and at the same time the best scene of preparation for these mansions. It has, in short, enabled the Christian world to take an immense step towards perfection in every thing that tends to enlighten, improve, and bless mankind. And it has been correctly said, that "the pagan nations were in a kind of moral infancy, in comparison with what we are at the present day."

I am aware that all this will be attributed by the unbeliever to the influence of philosophy, co-operating with the natural progress of the human mind. But there was philosophy, and the mind was at work in such men as Zoroaster,

Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Cicero, and others of like endowments before Christianity was introduced. And what was the result of the best efforts of the wisest men of the most powerful intellect? Nothing satisfactory, nothing clear, nothing decisive, nothing determinate upon the most important and interesting subjects of human inquiry, in respect to the Author of the universe and our being,—His character and government,—the ultimate design of our existence, and the end for which we are placed in this mixed and seemingly confused scene.

If God has,—as the disciples of revelation see plainly that he has,—inscribed proofs of his being, and stamped impressions of his character, and written lessons of human duty upon the face of his works, it was done in a language which, like the Egyptian hieroglyphics, became and remained illegible for ages, which the mass of mankind at least failed to read

and understand, till revelation served as a grammar and interpreter to this language. In regard to a future existence all was obscure, indistinct and doubtful, till *life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel*. If the human mind has attained to entirely new and clear and loftier views upon these subjects, it is reasonable to conclude that a greater cause, a mightier agent has been at work, and that this cause, this agent is no other than the wisdom of God, and the power of God supernaturally communicated in the gospel.

Philosophy, so far from contributing to produce or diffuse the better light, which has informed, and cheered, and purified so many minds, since this gospel was preached to the poor and rich alike, early and long contributed to obscure and retard the progress of this better light. When it could no longer contend with Christianity, it became its treach-

erous ally. It encumbered its vanquisher with its weak and officious aid. It, in no long time, blended with the pure and simple doctrines of our heaven-taught Teacher, its own miserable metaphysics and idle speculations. It incorporated with this divine institution so much that was human, that what was heavenly lay well nigh concealed beneath what was earthly; and the spirit of Christianity was repressed and overburdened for ages by the mass of extraneous matter, the gross and unwieldy body, as I may say, with which philosophy, co-operating with human passions and policy, had invested this offspring and image of Deity. Yet offspring of heaven, as it was, it could not be destroyed. It possessed a self-restoring principle. It revived with the revival of letters. It contained within itself the means of correcting the abuses and corruptions, with which it had been so long loaded and disfigured. It has

done much towards correcting and purifying that same philosophy, from which it formerly suffered so great incumbrance and disfigurement, thus returning, as it teaches its disciples, benefits for injuries, and overcoming evil with good.

In as much as philosophy has ceased to blend its dogmas with the plain instructions of Christianity, and having exchanged the pride of the teacher for the humility of the pupil, is content to set at the feet of Jesus, it has become the handmaid and interpreter of pure Christianity. It has already done much towards separating from the simple truth, as it is in Jesus, the accretions which had been gathering upon it for centuries from human error, superstition, imposture and bigotry. It is gradually removing the thick rust, with which this pure gold had been so long incrustated and covered,—under which its brightness and its sterling worth have been so much darkened

and depreciated,—which in the last century, was the occasion especially in Roman Catholic countries, why so many men of brilliant talents neglected it, as dross, which, though somewhat diminished by the attrition it underwent during the collisions of the reformation, has still adhered to it under every form of protestantism, in sufficient portions greatly to obscure and mar the Divine image and superscription originally stampt upon the face of it. Philosophy by the application of more enlightened and just principles of philology to the interpretation of Scripture, is wearing off this rust very rapidly at the present day, and the records of our faith uniformly emit a purer and diviner light, as this adventitious and earthly matter is cleared away.

But philosophy of itself and without a *teacher sent from God*, and the supernatural light imparted by Him, would still have left us to live and die involved in

the same deep shades of moral darkness, the same ignorance of God, and of the true ends and proper happiness of our being, and with the same hopelessness, or obscurity and indistinctness of views in respect to all beyond the grave, which form the deplorable distinction and long inherited portion of every people, yet unvisited by the light and blessings of Christianity.

A religion, therefore, which has done so much for the improvement, exaltation and happiness of the nations, that have received it,—a religion so adapted to the nature and condition of man, so fitted to meet and satisfy his deepest spiritual and moral wants, his instinctive desires and hopes, to which *the things that are seen and temporal* are all disproportioned and inadequate,—such a religion from this single circumstance might claim to have come to us from God. Every good and ingenuous mind must wish it to be true. And

when the several considerations that have been presented in this discourse, are duly weighed in connection with many others, which have been more clearly stated and powerfully urged by abler minds, the conclusion, it seems to me, must be inevitable, as it must be most grateful to every fair inquirer, that such a religion accompanied by such various and accumulated proofs of a miraculous and Divine origin, must be what it claims to be, a revelation from God.

It is difficult for an established Christian to comprehend the state of that man's mind, who can perceive more force in the objections, cavils and jests of infidel writers than in the arguments of Christian apologists for their religion. The difficulty is increased, when he recollects, that every objection of unbelievers, has been fairly met and conclusively answered when the objection appeared to have weight, and its futility

shown when the objection was merely plausible ; and, that after all nothing has yet been advanced by them to invalidate the main evidences upon which our religion rests. To refute a sneer, or retort a sarcasm, belongs not to the office of its advocate. Its heaven-commissioned author suffered the rabble, the priests, and his murderers to mock and insult without deigning any other reply than *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

Yet what are we to think of men who, without examination can reject, and seemingly without motive, can treat with levity and foolish jesting a religion, to which we owe most of the blessings, by which we are distinguished from pagans and savages in our political, social, domestic and moral condition ;—a religion to which we are mainly indebted for the authority of law, the impartial administration of justice, the maintenance of

peace and order, the prevalence of good manners, the safety with which we go abroad into society by day, and the security with which we repose in our dwellings by night,—and still more,—infinitely more,—a religion to which we owe those sublime and animating prospects, which lighten the burdens and assuage the sorrows of life, which dispel the darkness and vanquish the terrors of the grave,—a religion, in short, whence we derive most of all that soothes, exalts and gladdens the life of man, which imparts to its disciple

“ His strength to suffer, and his will to serve,”

—the light that guides, the faith that makes holy, the “hope full of immortality,” and the charity which assimilates and conducts the soul to God. Well might our Lord pronounce the prophetic benediction of the text upon the future disciples of this religion, who should believe without hav-

ing the evidence of their senses,—*happy they, who having not seen, shall nevertheless believe.*

For myself, I must have demonstration that this religion is a cunningly devised fable, which no unbeliever, nor writer against Christianity, living or dead, has yet shown or can show to be stronger than the “proofs from holy writ” of its Divine origin and truth, before I would consent to resign this religion, as false. Nay, if the entire world were agreed to reject it as a fiction, I would still reply to the unbelieving world, in the words of the poet,

“What truth so precious as this cheat?”

And I would still cherish in life and in death the promise, which in God’s name it has promised me, *even eternal life.*

My young auditors will accept my friendliest wish and prayer for them, that they may make this religion, not

only the greatest and strongest conviction of their understanding, but the deepest and most cherished sentiment of their heart. Your parents, your best friends cannot ask of God for you, you cannot ask for yourselves a greater good than an early and cordial adoption of the religion of the bible, as the only guide that can conduct your steps in safety through "the slippery paths of youth,"—the only certain pledge and security of a virtuous and honorable manhood,—the only refuge of gray hairs,—the sole antidote of death, and the precious earnest of immortal joys. That it may be all these to each of my young auditors, will God grant for his infinite mercy's sake. Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

RELIGION NECESSARY IN YOUTH AND IN ALL CONDITIONS
AND ERAS OF LIFE.

1 Kings, XVIII, 12.—*But I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth.*

It is a great mistake, a deplorable error, into which most young persons fall, that at their time of life they have no serious concern with religion. They have other things to attend to, more suitable to their years, more pleasant, as they think, and more in unison with their keen relish of life and the gay anticipations of youthful hope. The morning sun of their existence throws a brilliance and freshness over the opening perspective of life, which enchants and ravishes their senses. Every object and scene about them is decked out in all the rainbow hues of fancy, in all the attractive

charms of novelty, gaiety and pleasure. Whatever strikes their eye or ear, by the poetry of their young and vivid imagination, is made to wear the shape of a new invitation to enjoyment. At every step new flowers spring up and invite them to put forth their hand and to pluck them, new forms of beauty start up and invite them to gaze and admire, new music swells upon the ear and detains them to listen, new images of delight rise up before the imagination and lead them captive with pleasant illusions. The prospect before them is continually varying, ever new and ever delightful.

‘Surrounded,’ say they ‘with so many pleasures, in the midst of a world, which abounds with every thing, that can gratify and entertain us; light of heart, full of health, pleased with every thing, what have we to do with the sad and sombre warnings, the melancholy and solemn offices and counselings of religion?’

Away with it; 'tis an interrupter of our joys. We need it not,—we can be happy without it. It may do well for the sick, the unhappy, the aged and the dying. For such it *was* intended, and no doubt is a very good thing in its place. We will resort to it when we find it necessary. But at present *we will crown ourselves with roses ere they be withered and will let no flower of the spring—no pleasure of youth unenjoyed—pass away.*'

Thus are the young beguiled by the fascinations of youthful pleasure and the delusive promises of happiness, which the world holds out to us, when we first enter upon its untried scenes; and such is the language, if not of the lips, at least of the conduct of too many of our youth.

Sensible of the great and peculiar perils which encompass the steps of the young, thus deceived by the specious promises of youthful hope, and the beautiful but evanescent coloring, which imagination

gives to all objects at their period of life, I would, if possible, disabuse them of their error and forewarn them of their danger, especially of the fatal mistake they will commit, in neglecting religion while young. I would, if I might, convince them of the importance, let me rather say, the absolute necessity of *the fear of the Lord from their youth*. I would fain persuade them, under the guidance of this sacred principle, early to turn their feet into the only sure path of safety, of rational enjoyment, of true honor and peace in this life, and which alone can conduct to the immortal rewards and felicities of the life to come.

You will have already perceived by the text, that it will be my object in this discourse to show that *the fear of the Lord*, or, in other words, a religious, conscientious regard to the laws and commandments of God, is necessary to be begun and cherished in youth, and maintained through

the whole course of life. I am anxious to impress the minds of the young with the immense importance, the indispensable necessity, of beginning life with *the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom*, or of setting out in life with the deliberate adoption and practical observance of the heaven-taught truths and precepts of religion. To this end I shall endeavor to show their great and constant need of religion in all conditions and eras of life.

The fear of the Lord, says the Psalmist, *is the beginning of wisdom*,—that holy and sublime wisdom, which looks to the true and ultimate welfare of man, considered in his immortal nature and prospects,—that prudent wisdom, which teaches us to form a right estimate of human life,—that discerning wisdom, which instructs us in the true knowledge of ourselves, of our various powers and capacities, of the important relations we sustain and consequent duties, which we

owe to our Creator and to Jesus, the son and messenger of his love, whom he sent to redeem the world,—in a word, that Divine and heavenly wisdom, which in the language of inspired men is but another name for religion in its most extended sense, comprehending suitable sentiments and a correspondent conduct towards God and man. *The fear of the Lord*, then, has a far higher and broader meaning than mere servile dread, and differs widely from terror, or that awe of Almighty power, which makes the devils tremble, yet continue devils still. It is that admiring and filial veneration of the infinite, all-good and perfect Being, which makes us fear to do evil, not so much from apprehension of the retributive effects of his justice, as from unwillingness to forfeit his approbation and our own happy confidence in his parental love and kindness towards us. It has always blended with it a sentiment of love, a

desire to be and to do what it believes to be most pleasing to the transcendently glorious and amiable object of its reverence and trust. It supposes the mind impressed with a deep and abiding sense of our absolute and entire dependence upon God for life, breath, hope and all things, and of the consequent obligations, that lie upon us to love and honor, to serve and obey him, and submit our will to his will, and to consecrate all our powers to him, a willing, a holy and acceptable sacrifice, which is our reasonable service.

This is the fear of the Lord in the sense of Scripture,—*of holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.* And thus to fear God from your youth is, my young friends, your best wisdom and highest interest,—is your only security in a world abounding with snares to your virtue and perils to your soul,—is undoubtedly the great end for which you

were created and sent here,—is certainly your truest honor and happiness, and, if you are not to perish, like the poor brute, totally and forever in the grave, then this is the only course that can render your immortality glorious and blessed in that eternity to which you are hastening.

But you say, ‘we need not begin the course you recommend at our time of life. We can at present very well dispense with religion. We can be sufficiently happy without it. We are in the bright morning of our day. All is fresh and beautiful, and smiling about us. Nature spreads before us the banquet of pleasure; our appetite is keen for the feast,—it is delicious, and our joy is full without the help of religion. And whatever we may hereafter, we can have no need of it at present.’ So you may think; but come, let us reason together. Let us cast a sober eye upon the prospect before you, and take a brief survey of

some of the circumstances; some of the probable events, changes and exigencies of the untried life that awaits you; and let us see if you will not have great, continual and urgent need of what you at present so lightly esteem.

I. In the first place, you have this moment extreme need of the counsels of this heavenly monitor, in your present unguarded and exposed condition, which you deem so happy while you bid religion wait to a more convenient season. You need her instructions to cure you of that very blindness, which makes you think religion may be dispensed with in the gay and joyous season of youth. You need this light from heaven to dispel those cheating phantoms of the imagination, and those flattering illusions of youthful hope, which make you fancy yourselves in a world of unmixed good, hastening forward only to scenes of enjoyment through paths all strown with

roses, with no thorns, no briars to wound you or to impede your steps. You need the sober lessons of religion to admonish you of this great mistake, and to apprise you that much evil is blended with the good in human life,—that in the sweetest viands of the banquet is concealed the subtlest poison,—that under the most tempting beds of flowers lurks the serpent of deadliest venom—that often, when you expect only the honey of delight, you will find yourselves pierced with the sting of pain. You need therefore this prudent counsellor to teach you how to make the most of the joys that abound at your time of life by avoiding the bitter consequences of forbidden indulgence or excess, which must ever terminate soon or late in satiety, disgust and remorse. You need this enlightener of the mind to enable you to distinguish between those pleasures, which are innocent, which God approves, which leave no after taste of

gall, which are attended with no injury to the body or the mind,—and those which are sinful, which God has interdicted, which harm yourselves and others, which stupify conscience, and which, though they may wrap the soul in a momentary trance of delight, ultimately leave the wretch to weep and to deplore his folly in the bitterness of repentance. You may thus perceive how greatly you need the fear of the Lord, or that religious wisdom which it implies, in your first setting out in life, that it may guide and keep you in the ways of innocence and safety. One wrong step in the outset may be followed by a train of evil consequences, which exceed all calculation. Nothing is of more importance than for the young to begin well, that they early commence a right course,—that from the first they choose the way in which they should go,—that they may proceed on their journey warned and aware of the

winding tracks, and devious ways, and fatal labyrinths, into which the incautious and inexperienced are so easily decoyed. One false step will make way for another, that will naturally lead you on to a third, and your wanderings will probably increase till you find yourselves so bewildered in the mazes of error,—so entangled in the snares of vice, that you will no longer know by what means to extricate yourselves, nor how to return to the good and secure way from which you have strayed.

Beginning with *the fear of the Lord* will save you from all this; or if it should not entirely, and you should unhappily be led astray by the force of evil example and the united strength of temptation without and passion within, it will afford you the only clue, the surest means of return to duty.

II. You need it therefore in order to restore you to virtue, when, in an un-

guarded moment of inconsideration or weakness, you have been drawn aside from its peaceful and pleasant paths. *Wherewith*, says holy Scripture, *shall a young man cleanse his ways?* The answer implies just what I have been saying, for it is added, *by taking heed thereto according to thy word.* Except the fear of God, or those sentiments of piety which it implies have previously and early had possession of his mind and heart, the young man will not regard the word of the Lord so much as to think whether he has violated it or not. He will therefore feel no solicitude to compare and conform his ways to it. He will be likely to go on in his ignorance and heedlessness to greater lengths of sin. Like all evil doers, who fear not God, as the apostle remarks of them, *waxing worse and worse.* Whereas, on the contrary, if *the fear of the Lord*, a religious regard to the Divine authority and laws has early been inwrought into his mind, has grown with

his growth and strengthened with his strength, when he has been so forgetful, and off his guard as to fall into sin—for sin deliberately he could not—conscience will take the alarm and exert her power to reclaim him; she will not suffer him to sleep upon his sins; she will pursue him with her whip of scorpions till he is driven to take refuge from the smart of her stripes in deep repentance, in setting himself seriously to cleanse and correct his ways *by taking heed to them according to God's word.*

III. Again, you need *the fear of the Lord*, the invisible guards and restraints of religion to secure you against the seductions of unprincipled companions. Youth, we know, is pliant as the osier—is credulous, confiding, desirous to please, and prone to conform to the opinions and wishes of associates. You will be fortunate indeed if you do not find many bad advisers,—many, who by example and

persuasion will endeavor to entice you to criminal compliances and practices, which they call pleasure ; and, if possible, by their much fair speech and specious pretences will cause you to yield. In order to accomplish their purpose they will hold out to you the most alluring suggestions and flattering arguments. *The fear of the Lord*, a settled principle of reverence for the authority and laws of Almighty God, can alone keep you from falling into the snares of the wicked. It will enable you to see through the veil of their false pretences—to detect the baseness of their designs, and to calculate the miserable end of their ways. When they would tempt you to wickedness, it will suggest to you the thought that saved Joseph when tempted, *how can I do this great evil and sin against God?* And your reply to your tempters will be, *depart from me ye ungodly ; for I will keep the commandments of the Lord.*

IV. In your amusements again, which you follow with so much ardor, you need this same guardian and controlling principle to moderate your mirth and to preserve you from excess,—to regulate your imagination and the flow of your spirits, so as to render your seasons of relaxation and social intercourse innocent, refreshing, salutary and secure from disgust or regret upon a review. Into whatever place or company you enter for the purpose of amusement, if you possess a true religious reverence for God, a sense of his presence will accompany you, and this sentiment will be to you a good angel to keep you from sinning against him. It will lead you to discern and to display in your manners and conversation whatsoever things are decorous, pure, lovely and of good report, and will guard you from all that is opposed to these. If you would all carry with you, my young friends, a mind thus influenced and

guarded, into the social circle, your interviews would be doubly delightful,—your pleasures of a higher character, as your conversations and amusements would be far more rational. No one would wish to indulge, as there would be no one to countenance another, in any improprieties or levities of language or demeanor, which innocence, decorum or maiden modesty forbid.

I have thus far considered your need of the religious principle only in its guiding and restraining power to keep you from folly and sin, and to lead you to what is right, safe, and honorable, supposing all things externally to continue with you as prosperous, pleasant and agreeable to your wishes, as imagination and hope can possibly paint them to you.

V. But I am to remind you that there is a dark as well as a bright side to human life. You know not how soon the scene may be changed with you. How-

ever your hearts may cheer you in the bright and joyous morning of your day,—how secure and confident soever you may feel in your own strength, in the clear sunshine of your prosperity,—in the bloom and glow of health and in the gayety and buoyancy of youth;—in the days of darkness, (for these days will come,) when the black and angry storms of adversity shall burst upon your defenceless head, you will then need some better solace, some brighter hope to raise and sustain your sinking spirits, some safer shelter from the stormy wind and tempest, than this world or the things of it can give. Then it is, if not before, you will perceive that it would have been your truest wisdom and happiness to have cultivated and cherished the religious principle, I am recommending to you, *from your youth*. It is in these hours of need that its true value is known and felt in its efficacy to compose the troubled

spirit and heal the wounded heart. And happy are they, yea, thrice happy, whose experience in these times of need, can bear them witness, how rich and powerful are its consolations in supporting and tranquilizing the mind under the pressure of calamity and affliction. But if we would know its consolations in our days of trial and suffering, most certain it is, we must begin early, and in our days of health and prosperity to acquaint ourselves with its nature and to regulate our heart and life by its precepts. If God is not regarded, nor his favor sought by us, till we are driven to have recourse to him, as our last resort, we are forewarned in his word what we are to expect;—*when distress and anguish come upon you, then shall ye call upon me, but I will not answer; ye shall seek me early, but ye shall not find me; because when I called, ye would not hearken; for that ye hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.* Not

that God ever shuts his ear to true prayer,—but that our calling upon him from distress or terror, is not the prayer of humble trust and confidence, and therefore cannot bring us comfort and peace, which is meant by God's answering when we call upon him.

It appears then that you have need of the guiding, restraining, or ~~controlling~~ influences of the religious principle in all times and circumstances of your youth.

VI. But you are coming forward, as men, to fill the places of your fathers in conducting the serious business of life, in carrying on the social system, the general course of human affairs, and to raise up successors to yourselves.

You have important connections to form, new relations to sustain, new duties to discharge, and doubtless many trying scenes to pass through. In all these the religious principle, the wisdom from above, which I would persuade you to

cultivate and cherish from your youth, is indispensably necessary to secure you from falling into hurtful errors and from contracting pernicious habits, to save you, in short, from vice, and all the varieties of wretchedness to which it leads.

1. You will need it, in the first place, in that most interesting and momentous act of your life, the choice of a companion to share with you the pleasures and cares and changeful fortunes of your earthly pilgrimage. Here, if you are not directed by a spirit of religious caution and wisdom, you will be led by passion, which is blind, or by caprice, which may change the moment the indissoluble tie is formed; or by other motives too unworthy to be named; all which must lead to repentance, a life of discord and a train of evils, which, as religion only could have prevented, so religion alone can remedy, or enable you to bear them. Under the guidance of this heavenly monitor, you

will be directed in your choice to one, who, like yourself, *fears the Lord from her youth*. Your preference will be given to those qualities of the mind and heart, which will endure and please, when the enamel of the skin, when attractions merely external shall have faded and passed away. You will not suffer imagination to choose for you without consulting your reason and *the wisdom that is from above*, which will instruct you that *favor is deceitful*, and that *beauty is vain*, but that *a woman who feareth the Lord, she shall be praised*.

And might I caution the daughters of Zion in an affair; which involves in its consequences every thing, next to their salvation, most important and dear to them, I would warn them that they sooner take to their bosom "the green and fanged adder," than an unprincipled, irreligious, dissipated son of Belial, however in other respects agreeable or ac-

completed. Who can touch pitch and not be defiled? Who can be linked to corruption and not be polluted? It is impossible that a man not habitually influenced by religious principle, can make a good husband or good parent, or render the wedded life of a virtuous woman happy.

2. You will, again, find the religious principle necessary to you in encountering with cheerfulness and fortitude the cares, the arduous duties and trials, of domestic life. For, under the most favorable auspices, you will have much to bear, as well as much to enjoy. It is religion alone, be assured, that can secure your dwelling from the strife of tongues, from discontent and gloom, and weariness of life, when the tide of your domestic affairs sets adverse to your wishes. It is religion, which exalts, and consecrates and crowns the joys of wedded love, which keeps unimpaired and makes perennial the sweet

confidences, the household affections and endearments, with which a stranger intermeddled not—and which renders home the asylum of peace, of order and comfort, of all the kindly charities and dear affinities of nature, which give to life its sweetest relish and form the nearest approach we can make to the happiness, which was lost in paradise.

In your public transactions, once more, with your fellow men,—in all your various intercourse with a selfish and soiling world, you will need great strength of religious principle to regulate your desires and pursuit of gain,—to keep you just and upright in your dealings,—to control the unruly spirit of ambition,—to govern your angry passions, that you neither speak nor act with rashness,—to dispose you always to do to others, as you would that they should do to you,—and at all times to hold fast your integrity, and not to let it go so long as you

live in defiance of the seductions of pleasure, of wealth, or worldly honor.

And lastly, you will need from your own confession, religion in old age and at the hour of death. Yes, you will indeed need it to lighten the burden of years, to give dignity to the hoary head, and to support you under your infirmities,—to brighten your prospects in the evening of your day,—to compensate and soothe the decay of animal life and its pleasures with the hope of renewed vigor, and a happier life to come; which shall know no intermission or end in God's heavenly presence for ever. Especially in the last dread moment, which lifts the curtain of eternity,—and this event will come to most of you before you will have approached the period of old age,—in that solemn hour you will need all the support and comfort, which religion can impart, to sustain and speak peace to the

soul, and give it a sweet earnest, a joyful assurance of a blessed rest with the spirits of the just made perfect, *who can not die any more*, says our Lord, *for they are equal unto the angels ; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection*. But you certainly know that you can not have the aids and consolations of religion in these hours of need,—they will not come at your most earnest call, when you will most need them,—unless you early acquaint yourselves with religion both by study and practice, unless you make it your companion, your counsellor and guide through all the stages of life,—unless you *fear the Lord from your youth*.

I pray God that you may find religion, pure, rational, undefiled religion,—what I am sure it is to all who sincerely embrace it, the only guide as I have said, that can conduct your steps with safety through “the slippery paths of youth,”

76 A PRESENT FROM A PASTOR.

the certain pledge and security of a virtuous, useful and honorable manhood, the only refuge of grey hairs, the sole antidote of death, and the precious earnest of immortal joys. That it may be all these to each of my young auditors may God grant, for his infinite mercy's sake,—AMEN.

DISCOURSE III.

CONSIDERATIONS THAT ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THE
YOUNG AS MOTIVES TO EARLY RELIGION.

Ecclesiastes XII, 1.—*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.*

YOUTH, in all ages and languages, has been likened to the spring, the gay and flowery prime of the year, the genial season of beauty and gladness. Like that happy prime and holiday of nature, youth is the period of life that is most replete with gayety, with lightness of heart and joyousness of spirit. The feelings are then most warm and vivid, the heart most susceptible and most ardent in the pursuit of pleasure. The youth has not yet been taught by disappointment to distrust the delusive promises of hope. He has not yet been apprised of the perils and snares and nameless ills,

which beset the path of life, as we advance in it towards the goal of age. He enters upon an untried world, which presents to his credulous, eager eye, none but fair and flattering objects, all wearing a bright and joyous aspect, and inviting his embrace with the irresistible charm of novelty. He looks forward with rapture upon the elysium before him, so variegated with beauty and so stored with pleasure, that he is only in doubt where to cull the first flower, what delicious fruit he shall first taste, and which path to pursue of the many, all of which lead alike to the bowers of bliss. While imagination views the *clusters of grapes, the pomegranates and the figs*, and hope already begins to taste the *milk and honey* of his visionary Canaan, should sage experience tell the young deluded enthusiast, that he had searched the land,—that it was indeed *a goodly land*,—(see Num. xiii. 17, &c,) but that he had found the

enemy which possessed it strong and numerous ;—that disappointment and sorrow dwell in the valley towards the south,—perfidy, injustice and oppression in the high places,—misfortune, penury, toil and suffering upon the bleak and cold borders of the sea ;—and, moreover, that there are the giants, disease and sin,—the incredulous youth, no doubt, would reply to his hoary-headed counsellor, “thou hast brought an evil and slanderous report of the land thou hast searched.” He would sally forth regardless of the remonstrances of experience, and with a heart bounding with expectation, would travel on, till the briers that tear his feet and the thorns that wound his fingers, “feelingly persuade” him that the path of life is not covered with a carpet of velvet, and the borders thereof beset with nothing but roses.

It is thus from painful experience that the young, for the most part, are taught

to distrust the illusive visions of hope, and to circumscribe their extravagant expectations within the sober boundaries of truth and reality. They might however, save themselves much of the regret and misery, which their erroneous notions in early life occasion them, if they would listen to the teachings of the wise, who, having passed the period of youthful hope and illusion, have proved how wild and chimerical are the visions of youth, —how fallacious is the expectation of uninterrupted prosperity and enjoyment upon earth. But their eagerness in the pursuit of pleasure, and their unwillingness to believe that the career, which looks so promising and pleasant in the beginning, will terminate in disappointment, in *vanity and vexation of spirit*, too generally prevent their profiting from the admonitions of age and reflection.

Nevertheless, how slow soever the young may be to credit the report of those,

who have seen *the sore travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith*, yet they may be assured that the days of darkness will come, and that they may be many. However their hearts may cheer them now in the days of their youth,—how secure soever they may feel themselves in the glow of health and the bright sunshine of their prosperity,—when the heart shall be weighed down with the burden of sorrow and affliction,—when the dark storms of adversity shall gather over their head,—they will need some better solace, some brighter hope, to raise and cheer their dejected spirits,—some safer shelter from the stormy wind^y tempest, than this world, or the men of it can give. This better solace, this brighter hope, this most desirable shelter all may secure to themselves, who will follow the direction in the text, and *Remember now their Creator in the days of their youth*. The young are

admonished in these words to have early in mind their relation to God, as they are his offspring,—to preserve an habitual sense of their dependence on Him for existence and all its blessings,—to reverence, love, and obey him,—to seek his favor by prayer, and constant desire to do his will,—in a word, to be virtuous and religious. The reasonableness of thus remembering their Creator in youth I shall attempt to show from several considerations.

I. I observe, in the first place, that, in youth the soul is most susceptible of culture, more readily receives impressions of any kind, than in more mature years. And, as it is at that time of life, when the blank pages of the understanding, if I may so speak, are fast filling up, if good and virtuous impressions are not made, those of a contrary character will intrude themselves. Every soil of any strength, if it be not sown with good seed, when the

genial warmth of spring wakes into life the vegetable tribes, will be over-run with useless, or with noxious weeds. While the character is thus in its tender, embryo state, it more easily receives a religious bias, than in after years, when the heart has grown callous and stubborn by time and long inclination to crooked ways. The selfish passions and wrong propensities, which grow out of our animal nature, are then weaker and more easily subdued. Like the limbs of the newborn babe to the swathing of the nurse, they are pliant and yielding to the discipline and restraints of reason and religion. It is less difficult then to awaken and cherish those better feelings and affections of the heart and sentiments of the mind, which constitute a religious temper, a devout and heavenly spirit; such as pious reverence towards God, a warm and heartfelt gratitude for his countless bounties and mercies—filial fear

of offending him,—admiration of his power, wisdom and goodness from a view of the works of his hand, so glorious, so beautiful and beneficent,—a lively and thankful sense of the love of God in *the unspeakable gift* of his Son to a benighted, sinful and wretched world,—whose errand upon earth, whose life, example, instructions and miracles of mercy, whose sufferings and death, resurrection and ascension can hardly fail to arrest the attention, to impress the mind, and to fill the warm and ingenuous heart of the young with adoring love and earnest wishes to be like the Saviour. A mind, a heart thus affected and disposed at any season of life is a temple, in which Jehovah will delight to dwell. More especially in youth, the sacrifice, that is offered from such an altar will be *a sweet savor unto the Lord*,—a perfume pure and holy, “that incense, whose fragrance reaches heaven.” As a type of this early

devotion of the youthful heart to God, Jehovah commanded his ancient people, that the firstlings of their flocks, the first fruits of the earth, and the first flowers of the spring should be set apart as an acceptable offering to himself. *Our Saviour*, when he beheld the ingenuous countenance of the young man, *who had kept the commandments from his early youth*, solicitous, as he was, to learn the way to eternal life, *beholding loved him*. And if the approbation of man can add anything to your happiness, while you have that of your God and Saviour, you may be sure of the suffrage of the wise and good in your favor, whose praise alone is worth the ambition of the young or the mature.

II. A second consideration, which addresses itself to your desire of happiness, is the satisfaction which results from an early and uniform course of virtue based upon religious principle.

That the ways of wisdom, i. e. religious obedience to the will of God, are ways of pleasantness and peace, is most certain. All, who have walked in these ways from their early days, have found them so, and have never regretted the choice they have made, as is always the case with the early vicious and irreligious; but have invariably found their satisfaction increase, in proportion as they have advanced in them. They will tell you with one voice "this is the path, that leads to happiness,—follow us. We have found in it a peace, which the world cannot give nor take away,—a peace that passeth understanding, a joy, with which a stranger intermeddleth not."

Although this exalted peace and joy may not be the immediate result on entering a religious course, yet the gradual, increasing, and ultimate effect of such a life, *shall be quietness and assurance forever.* At first, it may cost the young

disciple some painful efforts, and repeated hard struggles to resist and vanquish the solicitations of appetite and passion, the force of example and the enticements of pleasure,—may for a while, require of him to maintain a severe conflict with foes without and foes within,—to combat and subdue the wayward desires, devices, and treacheries of his own deceitful heart and imagination.—But let it be remembered, that the difficulty of the contest bears no proportion to the prize of the victory, the severity of the struggle to the joys of the conquest. After the enemy within and from without shall have been vanquished,—after the law in the members shall have been brought into subjection to the law of the mind;—after the disentanglement of the will from the yoke of bondage, which the tyranny of the world, the passions and animal appetites early impose upon the young, if left to their own inclinations and inexperience;—after having thus

attained in some good measure, to the glorious moral freedom, wherewith Christ makes free his sincere followers, and standing fast therein,—submitting only to the reasonable restraints of enlightened conscience and the precepts of the Saviour,—the happy tranquillity and peace of mind, which are then experienced, will enable the christian disciple to *go on his way rejoicing*,—will fit him for the fulfillment of every duty with cheerfulness, and heighten his relish for every rational and innocent enjoyment.

Religion prohibits only the indulgence of those passions and appetites, which, if allowed to reign without check or control, are the greatest enemies to our health, the chief disturbers of our repose, the hardest taskmasters we can serve. Whereas those dispositions and affections, which it requires us to cherish and exercise, contribute in the highest degree to the health and strength of the body, to the ease and comfort

mind, and constitute the very essence of human happiness. What cheerful serenity, what a bright diffusion of quiet joy and gladness, is perpetually spread through the soul of the established Christian, who lives in the habitual exercise of those heavenly dispositions and Divine virtues, which the apostle so beautifully describes as the fruit of the spirit,—*love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.*

You have only to think, for one moment, of the different inclinations, aims and pursuits of the virtuous and vicious,—to contrast their characters and actions, to determine which are most likely to find that happiness, for which we were made, and which we all so eagerly covet. In whose bosom is happiness most likely to be found an inmate,—in his, who is the dissolute slave of illicit indulgence, of licentious appetites,—or in his, who keeps himself *pure and unspotted from*

the corruptions, that are in the world through lust? Will happiness abide in that heart, in which anger, wrath, strife and envy are suffered to reign and riot at will,—the imaginations of which are estranged from God and goodness, and are only familiar with evil,—or with him whose heart is the tranquil seat of good and kindly affections, of virtuous aims, and benévolent desires, *full of mercy and good fruits!* Will you look for happiness in the man or woman, who lives the weak and subdued victim of an unnatural appetite for strong drinks,—merging in habitual excess all that is most precious and valuable in this life to the extinction of all hope for the future,—or in the self-governed, strong in the strength of early sobriety, who sit down hale and cheerful to a frugal temperate table,—who *look not at the wine when it is red, who are not deceived by strong drink?* Are either the young or the mature, think you, in the

way to happiness, who resort either to the coarse or more refined haunts of idleness and dissipation;—or is it not rather the sober and industrious, who seek for happiness in their duties, in attention to their proper business, and in the exercise of the domestic affections,—in reading, reflection, conversation, and in the enjoyment of all those quiet and cordial satisfactions, which are to be found at home, by the genial fireside? Will peace dwell with the deceitful and false-hearted, in the dark windings of whose bosom lurk treachery, craft, fraud, and perfidy,—with the servile plodder after gain, always intent upon his worldly schemes,—with the proud seeker after human applause and distinction, always on the rack with ambition,—with the contentious, who delight in strife, in feuds and discord,—with the malevolent and selfish, who are always plotting mischief to others and unjust advantage

to themselves,—or with those, who seek it in that *love, which neither worketh nor wisheth ill to our neighbor*, in that sincerity, which always *speaks the truth in love*,—in humility, which seeks not for itself great things,—in that *wisdom*, in short, *which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, without partiality and without hypocrisy*? Does he feel the truest satisfaction, whose heart and hands are closed and shut fast, as with clasps of steel, against the wants and distresses of his suffering fellow-creatures, or, if he gives, gives grudgingly, as if it were parting with a right eye,—or is it the benevolent and humane, whose heart and hands are “open as day to melting charity,”—who gives cheerfully and is blessed in blessing others? Is happiness, think you, the portion of those, who are afraid to look into their own heart, conscious, as they are, of living in habitual violation of their religious duties, alienated from God, un-

prepared to meet the summons of death, always intending to repent before they die, yet held fast by habit *in the bonds of iniquity*, and dying at last *in the gall of bitterness*;—or is it not the exclusive portion of the virtuous, the sincere and faithful Christian, whose chief joy it is to hold frequent communion with his own heart and the great Searcher of all hearts, —who reverences his character and laws, and who with humble confidence, hopes in his mercy, in whose view death is divested of its terrors, and whose last end is peace?

In view of this brief sketch of these different characters, and of the different issues to which they lead, is there one of my young auditors but is ready to say, “Let me live the life and die the death of the righteous.”

III. And that you may thus live and die, be persuaded early to commence a religious life from a consideration of the

nature of habit. Habit, it has been correctly said, is second nature. We are all indeed the creatures of habit. All our virtues must become habitual before they are justly entitled to the name. The aggregate habits of a man constitute his character. It is not an occasional address to heaven, a prayer put up in distress or in the immediate prospect of danger, that makes a pious man; but regular, daily devotion to God; an habitual sense of his universal presence; and reverence of his glorious perfections. It is not a single act of beneficence, that makes a charitable man; but the habitual doing of kind and friendly offices. And so of all the virtues. The same is true of wrong or vicious actions. It is not a single instance of excess, that brands the character with intemperance; but the habitual indulgence of an inordinate appetite for stimulating drinks. Habits, formed in youth, commonly adhere to the

character through life. From the hue and complexion of the early dispositions and principles, the after life, in a great measure, takes its coloring. So much is the future conduct and character influenced by the early bias given to the mind, the inclinations and habits, that it has long passed for a maxim, "that what a man is at twenty, he will be, in a greater or less degree at sixty."

How infinitely important is it then that the young should *remember now their Creator in the days of their youth!* You, who are just beginning life, cannot be too often, or too seriously reminded, that the character, which you are now forming, may determine your eternal destiny. Perhaps, on the course of conduct, on the forming habits of this year, possibly, on the improvement, or abuse, of a much shorter period, your everlasting interest may depend. Pause, then, let me beseech you, and reflect, before you ad-

vance too far,—whether there be in you any evil way,—whether in secret you do not cherish some easily besetting sin,—whether you do not allow yourself in thoughts, inclinations, words, or actions, or neglect of duties, which, if persisted in, will lead to vice and misery,—whether you do not forget the God that made you, and rob him of that reverence, and those daily expressions of love and gratitude, which are due from you to your Almighty Maker, your gracious Preserver and constant Benefactor. Begin well, and it is morally certain, that you will go on and end well. But, if you will not begin with *the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom*,—if instead of fleeing, you rashly pursue those dangerous ways, those forbidden paths, which lead down to the chambers of death,—if your beginning be bad, your progress will be worse, your end inevitable ruin and woe. It will be in vain, that you may

determine, when you grow old, that you will repent, and forsake your evil ways and turn unto the Lord, and *live soberly, and righteously, and godly* the rest of your life. If you wait for that time, you will see your error, believe me, when it will be too late to repair it. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may you, who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well.*

IV. Lastly, let me earnestly urge you to the early remembrance of your Creator, to commence early a sober, righteous and godly life, from a consideration of the uncertainty of life to the young, as well as the mature, the certainty of death, and the possibility of its immediate approach.

“Death’s shafts fly thick,” and neither health, nor youth, nor strength, nor beauty, nor wealth, nor wisdom can hold out a shield, that will surely guard us against them. On every side we see our

friends drop off, like leaves in autumn. We follow them to their place of silence, —to that bourne, whence no traveler returns ;—we see them consigned to dust, and mingle with the dead ; yet, strange to tell, “ we lay it not to heart.” We give a sigh, a tear or two perhaps, to the memory of the departed, and we return to our homes and occupations, to our farms and our merchandize, as unconcerned, as if we drew immortal breath. Strange, that we never think of death, and of ourselves at the same time ! Do we need arguments to convince us that we are mortal ? *Our fathers*, our coevals, and many a youth who began life with us,—*where are they ?* Gone the way of all the earth. Who of us has not been called to mourn the departure of some friend or relative ? We have indeed seen all ages borne promiscuously to the grave, the house appointed for all living. One has died in his full strength,

—another has languished long in bitterness of soul. One has been suddenly whelmed in a watery grave, another fallen the victim of disease far away from home and friends. One has been snatched away by fatal casualty, another gone lingering after, by slow and natural decay. *God has changed their countenance and called them away. The eye that hath seen them shall see them no more. The places that have known them shall know them no more. We shall go to them, but they will not return to us.* I do not advert to these melancholy ravages of death to revive those sorrows of the bereaved, which have been laid to rest by time. I do it, not to recall to your remembrance those scenes and images of mournful regret and sadness, which have passed away like a troubled dream or vision of the night,—not to open afresh those wounds which have ceased to bleed,—not to renew the anguish and the grief

at parting with the dying, which may have long since been hushed in the bosom of pious submission to the will of God. I do it to bring home to the minds of us all the salutary recollection that we have to die,—especially to impress it upon the minds of the young, who are naturally prone to presume upon many coming years of health and pleasure,—who are apt to put far from them the evil day, and to think seldom or never upon their last inevitable hour.

The day of our death is wisely concealed from us. We know not at what hour we may be called away, whether in the morning, meridian, or evening of our day. And it is of small moment when we are to die. But it is of infinite moment that we should be always prepared for death. It would profit us little, nay, it might be our bane to know the exact number of days we have to live. But it will profit us much *so to number our days,*

that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Let me hope that the considerations, that have been offered, may have their due weight and influence to engage the young of my charge to *remember now their Creator in the days of their youth.* Wait not for a *more convenient season.* A better you can never have ; and you may be called suddenly away, as others have been before you. Ask yourselves, each of you, if God should require your soul this night, could you hope to meet your Judge in peace ? Conscience must give a doubtful response I fear, to many of you. Can it be then that you will continue unconcerned and at ease in this uncertainty,—that you will waste in indolence, in folly, in thoughtlessness, if not in sin, “ the life which Divine compassion spares,”—that you will live on, as if to learn to die were no concern of yours ? Well might the poet exclaim,—

"O more than satish !

**For creatures of a day, in gamesome mood,
To frolic on eternity's dread brink
Unapprehensive, when for aught we know
The very first swollen surge shall sweep us in !"**

While you, who are in the morning of your day, see your elders around you unconcerned, regardless of their highest interests, wholly immersed in the cares, the riches, or pleasures of this life, you may imagine it is time enough for you to think of better things. While you see grey hairs still stooping to the earth and picking up straws, as it were, instead of seeking and securing the pearl of great price, a heart right with God,—and pluming their spirits for their speedy flight to heaven,—you may imagine you have excuse for thinking little of the world to come. But their example should be to you a beacon to warn, and not a pattern to copy. The aged must soon die ; but the young are not secure. If the dry leaves of autumn must fall with

the first rising breeze, are not the green buds of spring sometimes nipt by untimely frost ? Trust not then to some uncertain future time your preparation for death and the life to come. Be wise to-day ;—*to day, if ye will hearken to the voice of God, harden not your hearts, while it is called to day. Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

DISCOURSE IV.

CONSIDERATIONS THAT ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THE
YOUNG, &c., CONTINUED.

Ecclesiastes, XII, 1.—*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.*

PART I.

WHEN we address the young we address in respect to the interests of religion both in relation to themselves and to the community, the most important class of our hearers. We address a class whose mind and character are yet unformed, but are rapidly forming, and who are themselves to form and to determine the character of the next generation. We address a class, on whom the eyes of the virtuous and religious of mature

years are turned with a deep and earnest solicitude to see whether they are to leave behind them a race, whose virtue, whose morality will rest upon the basis of an early cherished and deep felt piety and established faith in the Christian doctrine of immortality and righteous retribution,—or a race of mere worldly men and women, whose virtue has no better foundation than a cautious, calculating prudence, whose morality is only to do as others do. We address a class of immortal beings, whose character will derive its complexion from their early principles and habits, and whose character thus formed will determine their condition for eternity. We address a class, over whom no vicious propensity or corrupt practice has yet, as we may hope, established the despotic dominion of habit,—over whom the allurements of a mere earthly ambition, or the seductions of a life of mere animal pleasure

have not yet acquired a fixed ascendancy.

But it is a discouraging consideration that we address a class naturally indisposed to reflection, whose attention is so occupied with the amusements of youth and the gay visions of youthful hope, that the serious subject of religion, their duties as immortal beings, timely preparation for death, judgment and eternity, can rarely find a place in their thoughts much less gain a permanent hold and influence upon their heart and conduct. It is a discouraging thought, moreover, that we address a class, who can plead the example of so many of their elders in excuse for their neglect of the Christian ordinance of the Lord's supper, which was instituted and enjoined upon all believers, as an avowal and pledge of their faith in Christ, and their determination to live and die as his disciples. With the exception of here and there one brought to reflection and a serious frame of mind by

affliction, or some affecting providence or awakening call from God, we find the young as slow to confess their Saviour before men, as their seniors, who seem to regard a profession of faith in Christ, evinced by joining in the commemorative rite of the supper, as an exploded ceremony, with which enlightened and liberal men have nothing to do.

I will not cease, however, to address myself to the young, who are the hope of society, the hope of the church, and to whom the ministers of religion must look if any where for encouragement, for fruit and success in their ministry. I would therefore call once more upon the young before me in the language of earnest and affectionate entreaty, of parental counsel and solemn admonition, *as in the text, to remember now their Creator in the days of their youth.*

Let us first inquire what is implied in the admonition to remember your Creator ;—in the next place, why with

such peculiar emphasis and solemnity you are enjoined to remember your Creator in the season of youth ; and in the third place I will suggest some of the motives and inducements to early piety, that seem to me most worthy of your serious consideration.

I. I would remark, in the first place, that the language of the text, is eminently beautiful and appropriate to the grand object of every religious monitor of the young. It implies all that most especially requires to be corrected in the young. It implies what is the very ground and reason of the admonition in the text, that unreflecting levity of mind, that inconsideration and indisposition to think with seriousness upon the subjects pertaining to religion, the objects of faith, *the things that are unseen and eternal*, which are the usual and characteristic defects of youth. It implies what is too generally true of the mature, as well as of the

young, that their thoughts are occupied about every other subject rather than their Creator. It implies what is indeed the source of the error to be corrected that they do not like to retain God in their thoughts. It implies that they yield themselves up to the influence of present objects, and to the dominion of those passions and inclinations, which naturally dispose them to forget God,—to forget that he is the ever present author and supporter of their existence, happiness and hopes, and to whom, as the source of every blessing, their earliest thoughts and most grateful affections ought habitually to turn. All this is certainly implied in the admonition before us. For, if the young were not prone to forget their Creator, there would have been no occasion for this and similar injunctions so earnestly addressed to the young in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

For the young to remember their Cre-

ator, then, implies that they awake from this inconsideration and forgetfulness, that they seriously and reverently call to mind the great though unseen Being that made them, and for what purposes they were made and are preserved. To remember God is to think of him habitually, to feel that we are passing life in his great and hallowed presence, to realize that *in him we live, and move, and have our being*. It is to have the conviction fixed deep in the mind, that while we live unmindful of God, estranged and alienated from him, we cannot in this state be the objects of his approbation and favor, nor be fitted, if we die in this state, for those joys in the heavenly world, which await only those, who are qualified in temper, in love and likeness to God, to associate with the loving and pure in heart in the community of the blessed. Not only this; but to remember your Creator, as the text enjoins, is to feel your dependence upon

him, to realize his government over you, that as he supports you by his providence, you are bound to submit to his authority and guidance,—that as your supreme benefactor he has the highest possible claim to your earliest and best affections and obedience. To remember your Creator is to carry with you the thought wherever you go, that you cannot go from his presence, or escape the notice of his eye,—that he surrounds your bed and your path,—that he is witness to your most secret thoughts and desires,—that there is no place where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves,—that *God will hereafter bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* To remember your Creator is, in short, to acquaint yourself with his will and your duty and destination, as disclosed and made intelligible to the humblest capacity in the scriptures ;—to devote to God *the dew of*

your youth,—to give him your heart,—to serve him by a diligent and virtuous improvement of your time and faculties,—to prefer the approval of God and your conscience above every earthly good,—to turn away from the vices and follies to which the young are peculiarly liable, and to follow the instructions, to cherish the spirit and make the heavenly and divine life of Jesus your standard of duty.

II. This you are to do in the days of your youth. Why, we are to inquire in the next place, you are so earnestly exhorted to this in the days of your youth? Why, indeed, are there so many calls and admonitions addressed to the young in particular to be religious? You cannot be ignorant that the scriptures abound with exhortations to the young to devote their earliest affections to God. You are exhorted to seek God early and are assured that thus sought he will be found of you. *Exhort young men*, says the

Apostle, *to be sober minded.* The wisdom from above thus calls to the young, *harken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways.* God is elsewhere represented as saying to the young, *Wilt thou not from this time, cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth.* And in the beautiful chapter which begins with the text, you are urged to the early remembrance of your Creator by the most serious and affecting considerations. On the other hand, you are warned that if you early abandon yourselves to forgetfulness of your Creator, to the uncontrolled indulgence of youthful tastes, walking in the ways of your own heart, and in the sight of your own eyes, for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. The God that made you, by whose spirit all these exhortations and warnings were dictated, who knows all your frame, and how the true ends and happiness of your being can be best secured, seeing

the need you have of them, has, in his paternal wisdom and love, addressed to you these earnest and pressing calls to be early religious. It is a law of the nature your Creator has given you, that youth is the best time to seek him,—that the religion, the piety, which is associated and as I may say incorporated with the early thoughts and affections of the expanding mind and heart, is the only religion, the only piety that will be felt and operate upon the character in mature manhood. God sees, we may believe, with a Father's pity and concern, those untaught, unreflecting and unguided souls, which came into life all pure and spotless from his hand, early seduced and led astray by pleasure and corrupted by vice, unmindful of their Maker, of his laws and their immortal destination,—slighting the mercy and the grace that would save them, and recklessly following the impulses of passion and appetite, in the way that

leadeth to utter reprobation and woe. According to those laws, which he has established, God sees that among those who have corrupted their ways, the most hopeless of reform are those, who remembered not their Creator in the days of their youth. For this reason the young are admonished with such peculiar solemnity that if they forget God and the duties they owe to their Maker in the morning of life, the danger and the probability is that they will never think of these duties to any purpose or effect, when they grow old, when the pleasures and business of life shall lose their attractions.

I would not by this remark be understood to mean that even the aged, who have lived without God even from their youth, may not turn to God with a sincere and contrite heart even at the eleventh hour. The momentous and affecting considerations presented in the gospel,

enforced by the spirit and providences of God, have in every age subdued and transformed the heart and temper of the most obdurate and inveterate transgressors, who have grown old in irreligion and sin. These rare instances serve to show that it is never too late to make the attempt to reform, to seek from God a new heart, a new will, and to live a new life. But from the nature of habit and the ordinary operations of God's spirit, and the known lessons of experience, by which we are to govern ourselves in moral and spiritual, as in temporal concerns, there are various and strong reasons to evince that youth is the season most fit and favored of God for attending to religion, for commencing a religious life.

III. 1. As proof of this, consider, in the first place, the imperceptible formation and unyielding force of habit. The first step in guilt is allowing the secret wish

or inclination for some criminal indulgence to find a resting place in the imagination. Conscience at first remonstrates; but by thinking often upon the pleasure or advantage of the forbidden act it is soon silenced. This internal monitor and guide, if not obeyed, loses by degrees its influence. This is called in Scripture *grieving the Spirit of God*. And when this *still small voice* within is silenced, God is said to take his Holy Spirit from us. What was at first done timidly, reluctantly and from the strong impulse of passion or appetite comes at length to be practiced without fear or hesitation, that is, becomes a habit, a regular thing, which is repeated almost without a feeling or consciousness that it is wrong, a violation or dereliction of duty. Every sin, every vicious disposition or habit grows out of this indulged inclination or desire for such objects or gratifications, as are criminal or of pernicious tendency. So

long as the young live unmindful of their Creator and negligent of the duties of religion, every day is carrying forward this process of confirming them in habits of irreligion, if not of infidelity and vice.

Now in those changes of conduct or manner of life, that sometimes take place without regard to religion or the retributions of eternity, and merely from motives of present interest or reputation, all who have attempted such changes from bad to good will recollect how much more easily they could turn from practices or modes of living but recently adopted, than from those to which they had been long addicted. Take, as an illustration, a man grown into years in the indulgence of any vicious disposition or passion,—avarice, for instance. Ridicule will cure this vice in the young miser. He may be shamed out of it by the laugh and sneer of his fellows. But upon the aged miser you may exhaust all means of cure

in vain. You might as well attempt to restore to his gray locks the glossy hues of youth, or give smoothness to the brow which age has furrowed with wrinkles. Talk to him of charity, of public spirit, of disinterested beneficence ; then go and deliver the same discourse to the dead, and your success will be the same with the one as the other. This difficulty of bringing a man to act against the force of established habit is not peculiar to avarice. It is the same with every vice or long indulged obliquity in the character. The current of thought and feeling that has so long set in one direction, as to have become habitual, is well nigh as difficult to change, as to cause a stream to flow upward towards its source. To change a settled habit is represented in Scripture as all but impossible. It is to change the skin of the Ethiopian,—to wash out the spots of the leopard.

While the young, then, will find suffi-

cient difficulty in turning their mind and heart to God and serving him in a sober, righteous, and godly life in the days of their youth, they are to be reminded, that while they defer thus to remember their Creator the process described above is going on, and habits of inconsideration and irreligion are growing and strengthening. While in this unguarded state, while God is not in all their thoughts, they are peculiarly and fearfully exposed to fall into the vices incident to the early stages of life, illicit pleasure, levity of thought and speech, intemperate indulgence of the appetites, and a nameless train of fashionable follies and excesses, comprehended under the current phrase of youthful dissipation. It is by gradual and imperceptible progress that all, or any of these vices acquire the dominion of habit over their victims.

The young who have been led captive by any of these vices feel, we will sup-

pose, some uneasiness about their condition to-day, and think with themselves that very soon they will turn about and begin a new course,—will obey the voice of conscience, the voice of divine wisdom and give to God and the claims of religion that place in their thoughts and affections, which they ought to hold there in preference to every other concern. Soothed and satisfied for the present with this purpose and with getting rid of the pain and self-denial of an immediate radical change, and feeling secure of the future, they go on putting off farther and farther the period of reformation until it becomes finally a habit of the mind to think of religion only as a thing to be attended to at some future time ; and this habit but too often continues till eternity separates them from among the living in time, and the opportunity for reformation on earth is past and at an end with them.

Since such is obviously the case,—

since the train of thoughts and feelings and course of life which are adverse to religion, and uninfluenced by regard to God and the retributions of eternity, are gaining strength, and will shortly, if persisted in, become fixed and permanent, like the lines and features, which mark the countenance ; and if my young auditors ever intend to give their heart to God, and to follow the instructions of Jesus, as their guide to everlasting happiness, why not determine that you will now begin a religious life, *and cry unto God from this time, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth ?* Why not resolve that you will now remember and obey your Creator, when the duty will be so much easier, if you begin betimes, when the heart is most susceptible of the holy and hallowing influences of God's spirit,—most open and yielding to the impressions of religious truth,—most easily fashioned to a resemblance of Jesus, in his perfect love

to God and man,—when you will have so few habits adverse to a religious life to vanquish—when you will have so few tears of regret and penitence to shed, and these with so much less of bitterness in them,—when you will have so much more peace and joy of heart in life, and at your last hour a confidence in God so much more sweet and blessed from having given to him the dew of your youth and the strength of your mature years ?

2. For another reason why youth is the fittest period for commencing a religious life, is the consideration that in the spring time of life you have greater sensibility ;—your affections are more easily moved,—your heart is most tender ;—you receive more readily and deeply the stamp and impress of that form of character, to which religion would mould her disciples. You offer a mind less marred by the cares of the world, less hardened by selfishness, by the deceit-

fulness of riches and the lust of other things, which in maturer minds choke the good seed of the word and repel the influences of divine truth. You present a tablet unmarked by the dark characters of vice, on which religion may find space and room to inscribe her sacred lessons in large and distinct lines. Not that you are even now innocent and without spot. For the best instructed, most amiable and ingenuous youths have many errors and defects to correct in their character,—many wrong dispositions and tempers, many deviations from innocence, and much undutifulness towards their earthly parents and their Father in heaven to acknowledge and lament. But although there are few who pass the age of childhood and youth retaining their innocence unsoiled and their manners unspotted, yet there are, we know, different shades from the pure white of innocence to the blackest shades of guilt, different degrees of hardness

from the heart of flesh to the heart of stone.

Your violations of conscience, we may presume, have yet been comparatively few. Selfishness has not yet entwined itself about all the fibres of your heart. You are yet capable of being moved by considerations addressed to your kind and generous affections. You would shrink from the polluting touch of palpable vice in any shape. All this may be,—and yet you may not have remembered reverently and lovingly your Creator ; he may not have been in all your thoughts. And if in this favorable period, you still forget your Maker and exclude religion from your thoughts and from your plan of life, which all in some form propose to themselves, you will probably plunge into the business and pleasures of the world destitute of piety,—grow more and more insensible to the claims of your God and Saviour upon your love and obedience,

until the most solemn and weighty considerations, involving the awful alternatives of awakening to a wretched or blessed futurity in the life to come, will fail to move the heart which has been hardened, or to affect the sensibilities which have been benumbed by early and long continued habits of irreligion, of unbelief and sin. Your affections now flow in a warm and generous current. Your souls may now if ever be kindled to a lofty and enthusiastic love of virtue and disinterested devotion to the service of God and man. While, therefore, you have hearts to be moved and sensibilities to be affected by the love of God and your Saviour, and to feel the beauty of holiness, the attractions of piety and the rewards of well doing, and sympathies to be touched by the wants and wretchedness of suffering humanity, leave the frivolous amusements, the trifling and too often corrupting pleasures, and idle van-

ities, which lead so many, wide from the paths of heavenly wisdom and in the pursuit of which, even while most eagerly pursued,

“The heart distrusting asks if this be joy,”—

leave the pursuit of these delusive phantoms, which mock their pursuers with emptiness, and by remembering now your Creator in the days of your youth, aspire to joys, that are real, that are solid and enduring, the peace of God, that good part that can never be taken away from you.

3. Again, as a third reason for thus remembering your Creator in the period of youth, you are assured that the early consecration of your powers and your time to the service of God and your fellow men by a sober, righteous and godly life, is an offering peculiarly acceptable to God and your Saviour. God hath said for your encouragement, *I love*

them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me. Jesus, when he beheld the young man who had kept the commandments from his youth, *loved him.* God seems to have intimated in the offerings, which he required of his ancient people, that the first reflections of the expanding mind, and the first affections of the youthful heart should be devoted to him. It was the first opening flowers, the first fruits of the year, and the fairest firstlings of the flock, which he commanded to be brought to his altar. Yet there is hope for the most offending, who have wandered longest, and farthest from God and their duty, that when they return with the disposition and determination of the penitent prodigal, they shall meet a gracious reception from the Father of mercies, who desireth not the death of the sinner. But with how different a confidence may the young man or woman in the freshness of youth,

with affections yet pure, manners unsoiled, and a mind uncontaminated by any stain or touch of vice, come before God and say, "Thou art my father's God, and early will I seek thee; thou art *my* God, and I would love and serve thee. In thy favor is life, and thy loving kindness is better than life. Be thou the guide of my youth. Teach me thy ways. Lead me in the way of thy holy commandments, which is the pathway of life, and in which there is no death. Make me and keep me wholly thine forever." An early and sincere self consecration like this is most acceptable to God, like the morning incense of old, whose fragrance ascended to heaven. There is no such confidence, no such reception for the early depraved votary of illicit pleasure, for the polluted victim of a life of worldliness and sensuality, burdened with early infirmities, and premature age, dragging his reluctant, feeble

steps to God, because he has no longer animal appetites, senses, or strength to pursue his gains or pleasures ; or to derive any further enjoyment from the world. Such a late and forced return to God, taking refuge in religion as a last resort, however sincere may be the repentance of the returning sinner, affords at best but a very dark and doubtful prospect of happiness in the life to come. We may not at present comprehend the long and severe discipline which such a soul may have to endure, before it can be fitted to associate with the pure spirits and "sanctities of heaven." To avoid all this let the young devote to God the first strength and ardor of their affections, the prime and vigor of their youth and manhood.

If there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, it must surely gladden heaven and earth to see the young in the midst

of surrounding folly, levity and thoughtlessness, in despite of every allurements to entice and seduce them from their allegiance to God and duty, while the passions are strong, and clamorous for indulgence, turning from the way of the ungodly, and going early in company with the people of God, the children of light, the disciples of Jesus, in quest of a better country, even an heavenly. Piety, religion, is always lovely whenever it appears in its genuine form ; but it is pre-eminently so, when we behold it shielding the innocence, forming the habits, moulding the temper, chastening the vivacity, hallowing the attachments and sanctifying the pleasures of youth. What dignity, what stability, what peace and joy are ever attendant upon the young, who early give their heart to God ; who thus remember their Creator in the days of their youth, and acknowledge him in all their ways ? God also will remember the youth, who

thus remembers him, through life, in death and forever. You may read it in his word, "*I remember thee, the love of thine espousals, the kindness of thy youth.* Thou shalt find that thou hast not sought me in vain. I will shield thee as in the hollow of my hand. I will vouchsafe my light to guide, and my peace to cheer thee. And those that have sought me early, and served me long, shall stand higher in bliss and in glory, than those who sought me late, and then only because the world was forsaking them."

PART II.

In previous remarks, several considerations were adduced to show the importance to the young of early religion, and which should be regarded by them, as motives and inducements, which their Creator holds out to them to be early religious.

I proceed now to propose to the young other considerations, as incite-

ments to early piety. A very serious one is suggested in the latter clause of the text. It counsels you to remember your God, and make religion your refuge *before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.* You are all doubtless looking forward to maturity of years, and would be shocked were it revealed to you that your sun should go down ere it was noon. You doubtless hope to arrive at that distant goal, when the current in your veins shall begin to be chilled and retarded by age; when your locks shall be white with the snows of time, when business can no longer occupy you, and pleasure can no longer please,—*when the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail.*

But in this expectation very many of you will be disappointed. You can have no assurance of long life. You may early stumble upon the dark mountains,

and fall into an untimely grave. The inscriptions, which bereaved affection has engraved upon the frail memorials of the dead, will teach you that the number of those, who die in early life surpasses that of those, who attain to maturity of years. Not half the human race, it has been computed, survive the period of youth. To those, who are destined to be removed from this world by an early death, you will admit, that it is of the first importance to be prepared for that event ; and that it is essential to such a preparation that the destined victim of this early death should remember God, and devote to him the earliest reflections of the opening mind, and the first affections of the youthful heart, in the manner above described. You would all adopt the prayer of the christian lyrist :

“ Leave us, Father, till our spirit
From each earthly taint is free,
Fit thy kingdom to inherit,
Fit to take its rest with thee.”

As no one however knows, or can know, who are destined to an early removal hence, it equally behooves all to make this preparation.

But suppose you live to old age. Of all the aspects in which we can contemplate a human being, that of an aged man, who from his youth has walked with God in the ways of righteousness, whose hoary head is an emblem of that crown of glory which awaits him from his righteous Judge, who stands ready to take his upward flight to that world, where the aged renew their youth, and flourish in immortal vigor,—this, I say, of all spectacles, which man presents to his fellow men, is the most august and venerable. On the other hand, the most melancholy and pitiable of all spectacles is an old man, who has provided no consolations for the desolate period of his age,—an old man, who has lived from his youth up without religion, without piety, with-

out God in the world,—an old man, whose licentious youth was succeeded by a manhood of unbelief, a heart hardened to adamant, a conscience seared to callousness,—an old man, who has through life made a mock of sin,—laughed at the fears of those who stood in awe of God, and a judgment to come,—who has made a jest of the christian's piety, and the christian's hope,—who has a thousand times done despite to the spirit of grace, and trodden under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant shed to bring him near to God,—an old man, who has thus to the last been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and whose only hope is, that he shall shortly die, like the beasts that perish, a death of utter extinction, but who is not without his fears that he may be disappointed in this forlorn hope. This is a spectacle, at which all who believe in the righteous retributions of a future life, must tremble

while they grieve. There is not one of my young readers, if not hurried away in mid life, whose old age may not resemble this sad spectacle, should you fail to make religion and the service of your God your early choice.

Although you may find in the pleasures and occupations of a life destitute of piety, unsanctified by a serious thought of God, or any abiding remembrance of your accountableness to him; although you may find wherewith to cheer your heart in the days of your youth, and even in your riper years, so long as you have health, and desirable connections, and your affairs are prosperous, you yet must know that all these sources of enjoyment are every moment liable to fail you. The continuance indeed of all earthly happiness, is precarious. The days of darkness will overtake you, and the years may come soon, and they may be many, in which you can find no pleasure

in what now pleases and satisfies you. You will then feel your need of some better resource, some more effectual support and consolation than this world, or the things of it can give you.

This support, this consolation can be secured in no other other way than by remembering now your Creator, and serving him with a sincere heart and a willing mind in the season of youth, and health, and joy, that God may then remember you, and lift up the light of his countenance upon you, when your days of evil, and years of trouble and sorrow shall have come as they surely will come, soon or late, upon all who live to see many years.

With all the supports, consolations and hopes of religion arising from the remembrance of a life early and long devoted to the service of God by virtuous and patient continuance in well doing, such is the infirmity of our nature, that the aged

are but good people to sadness and regret at being deprived of the vigor of their memory and importance in society, and to mourn over their impaired senses and appetites, the loss of their companions and equals in years, and their consequent desolation and loneliness in the world. Much of their time passes heavily and gloomily, even when they have the cheering and sustaining hope of soon exchanging their feeble and worn out bodies for one all glorious and immortal, like that of their ascended Saviour. Think, then, what must be the old age of those who are destitute of the supports and consolations of religion, who have lived from their earliest days in a state of alienation and estrangement from God, who have maintained no devout intercourse of prayer and communion with the Father of their spirits, who have no settled faith in the glad tidings of a life to come, and who are conscious of having done nothing

to secure a part and a lot in the promised inheritance of the righteous in that future life. They look back with peevish regret upon pleasures and occupations, in which they can no longer take any part. Dissatisfied with the present, they look forward to the future without hope, if not with fearful apprehensions of a judgment to come, which however confidently they may have denied or ridiculed, they may feel to be so probable and reasonable in itself, as to make them, when they think of it, tremble as it formerly did a hardened and dissolute Felix. Incapable of active employment from infirmity, cut off from their accustomed intercourse with society, having no treasured fund of happiness in the recollection of a life well spent in the service of God and humanity, no secret spring of consolation and joy from remembered communion with God, from recollected seasons of refreshment in his presence, when their meditations of

him were sweet,—no soothing hopes and foretastes of heaven; but all around, within and before them dark, gloomy and comfortless,—existence in such circumstances must be indeed a wearisome burden.

All or much of this you may and probably will experience, if you live to old age, except a religious remembrance and service of your Creator mark your early years, and you thus escape the snares and perils, and the corruptions to which your youth is exposed, and the consequent unbelief and hardness of heart to which they naturally lead. Escaping all this by an early consecration of your affections and your life to God and virtue, your age then, if you are not called before to your eternal recompense, will be as peaceful and happy, as in the other case it must be wretched and desolate. It will be the calm evening of a busy, useful, well spent and not unpleas-

ing day. And it will be doubly grateful, not only as it brings repose from the toils and cares and burdens of the day, but as an earnest of being speedily called to that glorious rest and reward, which awaits the righteous for all that they have done and suffered in obedience to the will of their Divine Master, in whose service their day of life has been spent. Having this hope, they rejoice when they see the night approaching, which summons them to the happy rest, which remaineth for the people of God. They look by faith beyond the curtain that conceals from their last bed of mortal repose the light of eternity, and they see in vision the spires of the immortal city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Their spirits long to mingle with the spirits of the just made perfect, and with them to dwell with God, "who is their home." And adopting each, as they depart, the language of God's ancient

servant, they bid adieu to earth saying, *now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace ; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Who would not forego all the false joys of a licentious youth, and a manhood of irreligion and worldliness, and endure cheerfully all the self-denial and self-discipline of a youth of piety and a manhood of christian godliness and sobriety, for such an old age and happy death as this ?

It deeply concerns you, my young friends, to bear in mind, that although you may not fall into an untimely grave, —that even should you live many years and rejoice in them all, yet the evil days of sickness or infirmity and death will come at last. You may indeed like many others, who have gone before you, be suddenly arrested in the spring-time of youth, and health, and strength, or in your ardent summer, in full pursuit of the world, unwarned and unprepared in every sense to go to your

great account. The bare possibility of this should hasten your determination to seek God early, and constrain you to be watchful, sober-minded, diligent in cultivating those dispositions and forming those habits, which will fit you for an early death, should you be early called away, for a useful and happy life should you live many years, for a blessed immortality, should your days on earth be few or many. All those who forget God in their youth almost inevitably, as they advance in life, fall into confirmed habits of irreligion, and an unspiritual state of heart and mind, if not into open moral delinquencies; and consequently when they die, quit the world in a state of stupid insensibility, or in the remorse and anguish of an awakened conscience. And beyond all this, if the suggestions of reason, the belief of all nations in every age, and the express declarations of Scripture, be not all illusion and fable,

there is another life, a judgment to come, the awards of which will be bliss to the righteous and wo to the wicked. However forgetful of God and regardless of his laws you may be,—however engrossed by present objects of interest,—satisfied as you may be with walking in the ways of your own heart and in the sight of your own eyes; however unmindful of this solemn issue of our earthly probation, certain it is, such a righteous discrimination and award of character and conduct, awaits us when we die. *For, says the apostle, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* And in the chapter containing the text, it is written, *God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* The sincerely upright and truly penitent only will receive acquittal and approba-

tion from their Judge. The entire character, the outward acts and secrets of all hearts must undergo the scrutiny from which there can be no escape or concealment. All sinful purposes, words and actions, of which the agent has not truly repented,—whatever has been profane, corrupting or injurious to yourself, or others in your language,—whatever has been wrathful, cruel or revengeful in your temper,—whatever has been false, deceitful, or fraudulent in your intercourse and transactions with others, will all appear uncanceled against you, except you shall have repented, reformed and corrected these vices and obliquities before being called to your final account. For this, and for adorning your character with the virtues opposed to these vices and obliquities, your life is prolonged from day to day. Let me therefore urge the young, whom I address, by the beauty, security and happiness of early piety,

—by the hopes of your parents and of society,—by all your regard and secret promptings of conscience to what is true, honorable, pure, lovely and of good report,—by your instinctive yearnings for a perfect and enduring happiness,—by your fondly cherished hopes of success in life, of length of days and a peaceful old age,—by your exposure to an early death,—by the solemn retributions of eternity, which shall follow,—by the worth of your precious and immortal souls, too precious to be redeemed by corruptible things, such as silver or gold, and which a Saviour bled and died to save from sin and wo,—by all these solemn and momentous considerations I would implore, I would adjure you to seek God early,—*to remember now your Creator in the days of your youth*, and to devote to his service the morning of your life, the dew of your youth, the freshness and fragrance of your young affections,

your yet innocent and untainted aspirations and wishes. So shall you be early blessed, and as has ever been the experience of the righteous, early satisfied from yourselves. Not the least among the happy fruits of thus remembering your Creator in youth will be, that it will render you amiable in yourselves, not with that amiableness which passes in the world under this name, an outside appearance of loveliness and good nature, but an intrinsic loveliness of character resulting from benevolent and pure affections, a deep-felt sense of duty, a virtuous and honest mind, aiming to please God by fulfilling the law of love, which wisheth and worketh good and not evil to its neighbor. Your deportment will have a fairness, a frankness, which neither needs nor desires concealment or disguise,—a dignity which even the vicious and profligate will respect.

You will have, moreover, within you

the basis, on which to build the hope of durable affection, peace, order and domestic happiness in a wedded life. To this you all early look forward. This is among the first and happiest dreams of youth. This is the state for which the God of nature designed you, and in which he has ordained that, if you follow his counsels in forming this most interesting and important connection, you shall find your highest and best earthly joys. But believe me, for I speak advisedly when I assure you, that the happiness, which is expected from a blind, a hasty, and irreligious union between an irreligious husband and wife, will prove delusive and vain. Let the light and thoughtless pair, the unbelieving husband and frivolous wife promise themselves what they may from that youthful ferment of the passions, which is sometimes dignified with the name of love, unless there be a feeling of dependence upon the Divine blessing for

happiness in this connection,—unless there be religion in your heart and in your house,—unless your union and affection, your cares and joys be sanctified by piety, your love will soon become extinct for want of those virtues and dispositions, which alone can sustain and keep the flame alive. Causes for dissatisfaction and contention will arise. You will have for each other none of those pure and sacred regards,—none of those mutual sweet confidences, and that hallowed “communion high and dear” of mind with mind and heart with heart, which grow out of mutual concern for each other’s virtue, spiritual life and peace, and the cherished hope, that in death and after death you shall not be divided,—that you shall be united spirits in the eternal home of perfect love and fullness of joy, of celestial purity and blessedness. Unless your union is consecrated by sentiments of piety, by religious sympathy,

by spiritual affections, it will be merely a union of the senses and not of souls, a union of animated clay, as crumbling and perishable as the materials out of which it is formed. And a principal reason why this connection is so often unhappy, is plainly this, that but a small portion of the wedded are influenced in forming this connection by religious principle,—or if one of the parties is religious the other is not.

There is a cordial sincerity, an endeared confidence, tenderness and purity in the union of those fortunate pairs, who are both religious and of like precious faith, which unites them by indissoluble bonds to each other, and by their religious sympathies to their God and Saviour, to all the good on earth and all the blessed in heaven. It is a union which has respect to something beyond death and the grave; and there is in such a union a spirituality, an exalted tone of affection,

which sensual and worldly hearts can never know,—of which the irreligious and licentious cannot even dream.

As, therefore, you are looking forward to the happiness of wedded life, cultivate a spirit of piety, be early religious, or your hopes of happiness from that source will be ultimately blasted. Choose your companion from among those, who like yourself, *remember their Creator in the days of their youth*. Thus connected, if, as you advance towards the goal of age, religion, integrity of soul and pureness of living mark your course, when you look back, and see the sum of your years gone by greatly to exceed the number of those that you can with reason expect are to come, it will excite neither regret nor gloom, neither complaint nor fear. You will behold yourselves so much nearer to your final and happy home in your Father's house. You will see, without an emotion, hoary hairs collecting upon your

temples, time plowing its furrows upon your brow, and you will feel without repining or sadness, the frost of age chilling your blood, and stiffening your frame. You can say with humble confidence, *He, who of old time was my father's God, and who has been my God and the guide of my youth—will not cast me off when I am old and gray headed.* You will have lived beloved and honored ; for you will have lived not only an inoffensive and blameless, but a useful life ; you will enjoy a soothing consciousness, a heart-cheering remembrance that you have not lived in vain,—that you have accomplished the true ends of existence here in a spiritual preparation for a better existence to come. And whether you are called to depart in the meridian, or evening of life, yours will be the peaceful end of the righteous. You shall go away to join the community of the blessed in God's heavenly presence, and be received among

those, whose vesture shines with a brightness far surpassing that of those late returning penitents, who have been but imperfectly cleansed from the defilements and sins of many years.

God grant, my young auditors, that the considerations, the motives and prospects that have been set before you this day, may produce in you that early seriousness and piety, which shall give you peace and joy of heart in life, hope in death, and blessedness forever more in the life to come.

DISCOURSE V.

A MARK SET UPON THREE VICES FOR THE REPROBATION
AND AVOIDANCE OF THE YOUNG.

Prov. VIII, 32.—*Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways.*

SOLOMON, the reputed author, but probably only the compiler of the principal contents of this book of Proverbs, has, in several of the first chapters, including that containing the text, directed his attention especially to the young. His manner of addressing them is most earnest, affectionate and paternal. Having felt how much his own innocence and purity had been marred by the seductions and snares, that lurk in “the slippery paths of youth,”—having gone the round of those pleasures, and wan-

dered through all those devious ways of illicit indulgence, by which the young are so often early lost to virtue, to usefulness, to true enjoyment and peace,—having with a philosophic mind, purposely to ascertain where true and lasting happiness is to be found, sought this fleeting image of the imagination in the festive banquet; in the wine that sparkled and gave its color *aright* in the cup,—in the sound of the viol and the harp, in the voice of singing men and singing women, in the harlot smiles of beauty,—in the unstinted gratification of vagrant desire,—in the possession of a throne and sovereign power, of unbounded affluence and grandeur,—his admonitions and counsels may be regarded as those of a man, who has experienced what he describes, and who knows the dangers and has smarted from the vices, against which he warns and would secure the young.—After having ranged thus freely in search

of happiness, through all the diversified regions of false delights, as well as the innocent and pure, as a parent wisely and tenderly affectioned towards his children, he counsels the young to beware of the dangers of illicit pleasure, to be on their guard against the seductions and enchantments of vice under the specious name of youthful hilarity, and partaking in the gratifications suited to the spring-time of life. He assures them that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that to depart from evil, to avoid sin in every form, is the surest evidence of true understanding. He urges home the eternal truth, that they, who heed not the precepts of the wisdom from above, wrong their own souls, and that they who give the reins to sensual desire and are led captive by the allurements and gratifications of appetite and passion, are in love with death.

He vividly and graphically delineates

the enticements and issues of these illicit gratifications, in other words, of sinful pleasure, under the image of a female of captivating charms and abandoned character, calling to the young as they pass along the highway of life, to come into her abode. "I beheld," says he, "at the window of my house, I looked through the casement, and lo, among the simple ones, I discerned a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner, and he went the way to her house. In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, she comes forth to meet him ; with the honied accents of flattery, with the mimic gestures of fond affection, with the artful eloquence of a practised enchantress she descants upon the preparations she has made in her dwelling for his reception, upon the joys she has in store for him. With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield, with the flattery of

her lips she forceth him. He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. As soon as the deceitful and cruel sorceress has despoiled him of his innocence, his peace and his substance, she casts him forth wounded, and not seldom slays even the strongest that go after her."

The simple think indeed that as they break from the restraints of religion, from that Divine law which lays its stern interdict upon the illicit indulgence of those *fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*, and follow in the train of

"This ~~g~~ing goddess with the zoneless waist,"

they are in the high road to happiness. Her deluded victims, in the mean time, know not that her habitation, so garnished with flowers and decked with fine linen of Egypt, and so perfumed with myrrh

and aloes and cinnamon, is nevertheless the pathway to shame, to sorrow and woe; —that the dead are there, and that every outlet from her house leads down to the chambers of death.

Happy it were for the young, if the instruction conveyed under this ancient allegory, this oriental personification of illicit pleasure, could effectually deter them from going in the way of this charmer, whose enticements have seduced so many from the path of purity, of early piety and sobriety of mind, to that which conducts to early depravity, dishonor and ruin in this life, and certain misery in the life to come. Notwithstanding however the faithful admonitions and instructions of the wise, and the warning voice of her numberless, wretched and repentant victims in every age, the allurements of this enchantress still lead captive her thousands and ten thousands of either sex.

The young and inexperienced, full of hope and easily deceived, but too seldom listen to the friendly cautions of the wise, and the warnings of the self-destroyed, and are slow to profit from any other than the dear-bought lessons of experience.

Those, who have gone before them in the perilous journey of life, anxiously look back to the young adventurers and point out to them the dangers of the way. They still persuade themselves that there is in those, who admonish them, some error, some mistake, some false estimate of things, from disappointment, miscalculation or mischance, which they flatter themselves they shall be so prudent or so fortunate, as to avoid. They press forward in the same paths, heedless of the beacon lights which their predecessors have left to show them the dangers of the way, until they find in the end, that they who hate instruction and are

deaf to the warnings of divine wisdom emphatically love death.

Some, however, in every age, in every community, are disposed to hearken and obey, and are thus saved from the corrupting and blighting effects of early inflamed because early indulged propensities and inclinations, which the Creator has given us, not to be our masters, but to be kept in subjection to the laws of mental purity, modesty, religious sobriety and virtuous self-control.

The young are easily made to comprehend these laws and their hearts to feel and appreciate the happiness of obedience to their authority. Their minds are yet open to impressions of the true, the good and the beautiful. They are susceptible, if ever, of all the kindly and hallowing influences, which the instructions of divine wisdom, and the disinterested counsels and admonitions of the good and enlightened can impart.

Vanity has not yet made them too wise in their own conceit, to learn of those, who are able to teach, nor pride of opinion closed every avenue of their minds against the entrance of new and purer light than they had previously received.

Worldliness, ambition, greediness of gain has not yet turned all the tender, generous and benevolent sensibilities of the soul to ice and adamant. The moroseness of age, the disappointments of life have not chilled the ardor of hope, the desire of improvement and the love of virtue. They have not yet, by long neglect, or contempt of religion, and of communion with God by meditation and prayer,—by transgressing often and still deferring repentance, come to the desperate determination to put off repentance and discard religion altogether.

Good principles, sentiments of piety and whatsoever things are true, honest, pure, lovely and of good report may be

instilled into their young and impressible minds and cherished there by the ordinary means of forming the human character. It is therefore of the first importance that parents, instructors and pastors co-operate with the young, and lend their aid in the accomplishment of this most necessary work. For the character of the community, which they will by and by constitute, will be just such as the young are made by education and self discipline. Whether we regard the young therefore, as yet unstained by vice, and as now in the critical process of forming their minds and morals to act a part of usefulness and dignity in society, or as hastening to the retributions of eternity to receive according to their deeds and improvement in this life,—regarded in either or any view, that their minds be early imbued with sentiments of piety and the love of virtue,—that they be early taught and accustomed to control their passions and appe-

tites, to preserve inviolate the purity, modesty and sobriety, as natural as they are becoming to ingenuous and uncorrupted youth, must be a matter of the deepest interest and utmost moment to themselves and to the community. *Now therefore hearken unto me*, says the divine wisdom; *for happy are they who keep my ways*. They are not only happy in themselves, but contributors to the happiness of all around them. *For the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee; love her, and she shall keep thee.*

Illicit pleasure, profanity, and intemperance are vices, to which the young, especially those who go early abroad, are peculiarly exposed, and upon which I propose in the sequel to fix a mark for your avoidance and reprobation.

I. *Flee*, said the apostle to his young disciple, *youthful lusts*. Keep the door

of the young heart resolutely shut against their entrance. Repel the first intruding thought, repress the first rise and stir of impure desire in the mind. If the fountain be defiled, the streams that issue from it will no longer be pure. The wanderings of the imagination must be restrained with a rigid hand. You must be able to say with effect to the importunate suggestions of this internal tempter, *peace, be still*, or you will not long retain your innocence. The saying is as just as it is trite, that all the instincts, propensities and passions, which belong to our nature, are, like the mighty element of fire, when under due control, useful servants, answering the important purposes for which they were given,—administering warmth and imparting activity to our being. But set them loose from restraint, allow them scope, and they become terrible masters,—reckless tyrants, that

hurry their blind and passive slaves into the commission of every species of crime and wickedness. There is no propensity implanted in our frame stronger perhaps than the one in question, consequently none so mysteriously restrained and held in check by the innate modesty and timidity of nature. Yet, if these natural guards and checks are once broken through and prostrated, and the loss of innocence is once incurred by illicit indulgence, there is no vice more pregnant with a host of uncounted penalties and woes to its victims, which will so surely and darkly overcast all their fair prospects in life, and may not improbably cause their sun to go down at noon. For it has been remarked* of the criminal indulgence of this propensity, that it is usually the precursor of a train of other vices, and that this sin, debasing as it is, will soon be the least of which the habit-

ually impure will find themselves guilty.* The young, who are yet innocent, but who are encompassed with perils in the evil communications to which they are exposed, cannot be too earnestly entreated, too solemnly adjured, by all that is most precious to them, by their dearest hopes, their fair fame, their health and peace, by all the hallowed joys and sweet confidences of virtuous affection, by all their wishes for respectability and usefulness in life, for a happy death and an eternity of bliss in heaven, to avoid the first sin. Let it be ever borne in mind, that yielding once to the suggestions of illicit desire is to commence a career of guilt, to which imagination can fix no limits. You have seen a mighty river struggling against the barriers that have

* "If we examine the causes which bring criminals before the tribunals of justice, we shall be surprised to find how large is the number, whom libertinism has led to crime in a more or less direct manner."—Degerando on Self-Education.

been raised to restrain its course, and to direct its waters through channels where they may be made subservient to the will and use of man. While it can find no broken or weak place in these barriers, all is safe. But the moment any part gives way and the stream begins to find a passage through the rupture, it is instantly enlarged, and the foundation is soon undermined. Every moment the breach grows wider and the stream more impetuous. At length it sweeps away every obstacle and rushes along with unrestrained fury and ruin.

The thoughts of many a timid and yet virtuous youth have been these. "I may indulge for once,—for once trespass upon forbidden ground, and then return, repent, and sin no more." Such is the delusive reasoning, with which all unpracticed transgressors probably deceive themselves; for there are few that would not tremble at the idea of setting out

upon a course of meditated and deliberate guilt. But once admit and act upon this dangerous principle, and your moral ruin is certain. Your purpose is to sin for once only and then to repent. You indulge. Conscience is tender and timid, and easily alarmed, and always speaks loudest previous to the first sin. You much more easily make up your determination to sin a second time and then to desist and repent. But conscience in the meantime grows fainter in its admonitions, or rather you cease to listen, and your desires by indulgence grown more importunate, headstrong and impetuous, hurry you away and plunge you continually deeper in pollution and guilt. The moral sense is blunted, its perceptions obscured, conscience is seared or put to sleep. This is what is meant by God's taking from the sinner his holy spirit, and saying of him, as of old, "*Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.*" A kind of

spiritual slumber or moral lethargy steals upon the soul ; and, instead of remembering and putting in practice the repentance purposed in the beginning, the mature offender, hackneyed in the ways and conformed to the loose views of companions like himself, goes about to find arguments to justify himself, to refute a divine revelation, to discredit a religion, which threatens every vice, every unrepented sin with a righteous penalty, with inevitable and terrible correction, till it reform the depraved subject, in the life to come. He will go to books or men, who tell him that all future retribution, and perhaps even a future existence, is a dream ; or, if there be any thing beyond the grave, that the wicked and the good, the impure and the holy will fare alike. It is thus that an early initiation into vice becomes the parent of infidelity. It is thus that a corrupted youth is usually given over in manhood to a reprobate

mind. And the hardness of heart and insensibility of conscience, and that indifference or contempt for religion, all which naturally follow in the train of early vice, are but the dreadful earnest, the fearful harbingers of future condemnation and woe.

Once more, then, let me urge upon the young of my charge, the admonition of the apostle, *flee youthful lusts*. Resist the first suggestions of illicit desire. Let not the thought of this vice dwell a moment in your mind. If it enter unbidden reject it with abhorrence. Remember that your body was created to be the temple of a holy and spotless spirit,—that you are enjoined to keep it pure and dedicate it a living and unpolluted sacrifice to God. And let the conviction be engraven in sun-bright capitals upon the tablets of your memory, that so sure as there is a God of purity and holiness, who is the friend and guardian of the pure and

holy, so sure and inevitable is the penalty, which he has decreed, shall follow in the track of illicit indulgence, of early libertinism; and that its consequences, loss of peace and self-respect, shame, fear, remorse,—not the gracious relents of penitential sorrow, but the sharp, relentless goadings of conscious guilt,—these and other nameless effects most certainly will and always do a thousand times overbalance the transient pleasures of the licentious and dissolute. Loss of reputation and health usually accompanies the loss of innocence. Jealousy, suspicion, a feeling of degradation, consciousness of deserved neglect from the pure and innocent, envy of the virtuous and happy, fill the tainted mind with disorder and gloom and torment. When once the self-respect, the dignity and peace of innocence are lost, those guardian angels of virtue, a proper sense of reputation and desire of respectability,

for the most part, leave the votaries of licentious pleasures to work all iniquity with greediness. In the expressive language of Scripture, *they devise mischief upon their beds*. A polluted imagination retains and cherishes the images and shadows of their guilty delights, as a sort of mental idols, to which they can turn when alone and worship in secret. Not only so, but as a consequence of these illicit and impure enjoyments, all relish and desire are lost for those which are innocent and pure ; just as eating poisonous food will vitiate and spoil the natural appetite for that which is salutary and nutritious.

Happy they who have known and who seek no other than those healthful and chaste delights which God and religion authorize, and encourage. The requisitions of religion, the laws of God, are in no instance at war with the true happiness of his children. There is not, within

the entire compass of human enjoyments one that can be named, which will upon the whole yield more pleasure than pain, of which we are not permitted to partake. But the pleasures, prohibited alike by religion and reason, are not pleasures in reality ; they are only so regarded by a deceived imagination, and a depraved taste. In their consequences they sting like the adder, and bite like the serpent. *God hath said, thus far, i. e. to the boundary of innocent and temperate enjoyment, you may go and no farther.* The moment you overstep the prescribed limits, you will find afterwards little true satisfaction in what is on the innocent and still less in what is on the guilty side. Make not therefore the perilous experiment. Keep innocency ; and cherish, as your most sacred treasure, a pure mind, enshrined in a pure body, ever guarded by decorous and unspotted manners. Thus will you preserve unmarred

your capacity and relish for those chaste and hallowed joys of a virtuous union, which God has ordained, as the divinest charm and sweetest solace of our earthly existence.

II. Let me next caution the young of my charge against profanity, or the irreverent use of the name of God, and the utterance of unmeaning oaths and imprecations. I would in few words hold up this vice, this sin to your disgust and abhorrence, under two views :

1. Are you ambitious of the distinction, and of meriting the character of well bred ? And would you avoid the imputation of vulgar and clownish manners ? Profanity is a sure mark of ill breeding, of a low and clownish origin, —of companionship with the rude and unmannered. No youth, who aspires to be classed with the well bred, and to be received into respectable society, will utter the language of profanity. It im-

mediately fixes upon him the stamp of vulgarity. For where is the vice learned? Only among the rude, the low, the unmannered. And to hear from the young, in the innocent bloom and beauty of the spring time of life, from whom we expect the language of simplicity and modesty, and the amiable and artless manners of uncorrupted nature,—to hear them mouthing the vulgar imprecations and profane oaths, which they have caught from the mouth of some intemperate, lost and pitiable remnant of humanity, excites at once our grief and horror.

Some plead in excuse of this practice, that they are angry, and that the language of profanity serves to give vent and relief to their passion. But it is certainly as easy to give vent to your rage in one form of words, as another. Why not adopt some inoffensive form of words, and when angry resound them with the same emphasis and fury, as you

would the impious oath, and thus, if you must, evaporate your passion ? But perhaps some are weak enough to think it a mark of manliness and spirit. The truly brave and intrepid, men of real greatness of mind, never swear profanely. It has been said of him, "who was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," that in all the vicissitudes of a seven years' conflict ; in all his embarrassments and vexations, an oath was never heard to escape his lips. Indeed the most cowardly poltroon in existence, nay, the poor idiot, I may add the ill-taught parrot, can frame his accents and voice to the utterance of the profane oath and of the whole vulgar vocabulary of impiety, with as distinct an emphasis, and with about as much rationality, as the most accomplished adept in this infamous and degrading dialect.

2. But I feel bound to present this vice to you under another and still

darker and more culpable aspect. The name of God, the solemn forms of judicial oaths, and the language in which the future sanctions of religion are expressed, should never be uttered but with seriousness and reverent awe. God has said that *he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* And *profane lips*, it is written, *are an abomination in his sight.* The sin of profane swearing has the air of offering a direct affront to the Almighty; and for which there is not even the ordinary apology of temptation, since it gratifies no appetite, nor can procure a man either profit or honor, but involves the soul in guilt, without the poor equivalent of present interest or enjoyment. Let me therefore entreat the young of my charge never to sully their lips with the language of profanity. Avoid the impiety of a practice,—which I am happy to believe is falling of late years more and more into disuse,—a

practice, which is at the same time a violation of good manners, and of a positive command of God.

3. Upon the vice of intemperance I have not time to enlarge. Nor is it needful, since the auspicious revolution that has taken place, well nigh throughout the entire christian world, has brought into discredit, and bids fair to banish universally the use of intoxicating liquors, as a common beverage. I can only say to you,—and this should be sufficient to make you stand in awe, and ever on your guard, that you fall not into this sin,—that the way of the inebriate is the most direct and certain and rapidly descending road to ruin, from which in former years a pathway was rarely found, in which to return. It is not long since we beheld this broad highway of the daily use of alcoholic stimulants thickly marked with the footprints of uncounted thousands, descending into

the drunkard's dark valley of degradation, wretchedness and death ; but among all these thousands only here and there and at distant intervals, now and then a single solitary footstep of one that returned. Of late the spectacle has indeed been reversed, and we have seen men returning in crowds from the drunkard's dark valley, and thousands of reformed inebriates are now traversing our own and other countries, the apostles and most successful preachers of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors. It is the most extraordinary and cheering among the many novel and encouraging aspects of the age. If it be not a manifest miracle, yet who is not ready to exclaim, *the hand of the Lord hath wrought this ; it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes ?*

But let the young still beware ; this contagious and once so generally fatal disease,—for it is a disease no less than

a vice,—is often insensibly contracted in early life ; and long before the subject exhibits any decisive symptoms of the malady, that is consuming him. When the young mingle often in the circle of gayety and festivity,—when the heart beats high and warm with convivial freedom and merriment,—when God is not in all their thoughts,—when the wine sparkles in the cup, and example, and excited thirst urge them to taste, they are often led to drink deep and to tarry late at the banquet, and to commit excesses, which by frequent repetition create an unnatural craving, which at length bows them down in ignoble bondage to a depraved appetite for strong drink. They sink lower and lower in the abyss into which they have fallen. They no longer have the strength or will to emerge ;—they no longer raise an eye, or offer a prayer to heaven for help. They abandon all the aims and hopes of

a reasonable being. They lose all perception and memory of the ends, for which they were made. They are content to be lost ; to become as the beasts that perish ; and have no wish to be any thing more or better. A premature death closes their history for this world, or they live the shame, the grief and misery of the families, to which they respectively belong. Let this brief sketch which tells a tale of woe, mournfully verified in the experience of innumerable victims of intemperance, serve as a beacon of effectual warning to each of my young auditors, that they *neither touch, nor taste, nor handle* that, which has proved the bane of so many thousands, once deemed as secure and full of hope and promise as themselves.

I have thus briefly adverted to the character and effects of three several but kindred vices, to which the young are peculiarly exposed, while passion is

strong and reason not yet matured. Aware of your danger, repeat to yourselves incessantly these three admonitions, *Flee youthful lusts,—Swear not at all,—Avoid intemperance*, that downward and rapid road to infamy and woe, whence formerly but few returned, and even these few, as it were, by miracle.

To be religious, *to keep*, as the text enjoins, *the ways of wisdom*, you must deny yourselves all forbidden pleasures,—forbidden because hurtful to the soul; but then you may enjoy, and with a higher relish, all that are innocent, and these will last. God is the kindest of masters, the best of fathers. He means you well, in all that he commands or forbids. If you begin early to serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind, you shall soon find his service more than freedom. Sweet are the labors of duty, and obedience is pleasant to those, who love the Master, whom they serve.

Seek God early, and you shall find him. You shall not only grow in favor with him, but with men. When your fathers are gone, you will come forward prepared to fill their stations with dignity. Or, if He, in whose hands is your breath, should see fit to remove you hence by an early death, your undying spirit, unstained by vice, will return to Him, who gave it, like the offering, which he required of his ancient people, a firstling of the flock, without spot or blemish, acceptable and well-pleasing in his sight. That you may be finally thus accepted of him, may he grant for his infinite mercy's sake. Amen.

EXTRACT.

“The prejudices of the world accord an excessive indulgence to libertinism. * * * * These prejudices are as fatal as they are blind, and it should be the first care of a sound morality to destroy them. Libertinism, in its external effects, profanes the most sacred institution of nature and society, violating, usurping, or destroying the family affections. It draws after it a multitude of failures in the duties of fidelity, delicacy, and good faith ; conducting, often insensibly, sometimes suddenly, to the heaviest crimes. At the same time, by a secret re-action, it carries a taint to the faculties of the soul, impairing dignity of character, enfeebling the power of meditation, by rendering self-recollection more difficult, introducing into ideas and sentiments a sort of licentiousness and misrule, which hurts the energy of reason as much as that of will, despoiling

the images of excellence of a portion of their charms ; while by the effects of the habits it draws after it, the soul is enveloped in clouds, and the radiant light and pure notions of virtue are enfeebled."

[*Degerando on Self-Education*, p. 414.
American trans.

DISCOURSE VI.

THE YOUNG CAUTIONED AGAINST THE SEDUCTIONS OF
ILLICIT PLEASURE AND SKEPTICISM IN RELIGION.

Ecclesiastes XI, 9.—*Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine own heart, and in the sight of thine own eyes. But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*

IN the first part of this address we have a specimen of the grave and solemn irony of Scripture. It condenses within a small compass the substance and import of all that has been conceived and so often said and sung to allure the young to the indulgence of illicit desire, to encourage and embolden them in the mad career of dissipation and vice. It is an

epitome of the deceitful sophistry of the passions,—a sample of the enticing language of sinful pleasure. This “reeling goddess with the zoneless waist,” this painted harlot, that has slain her thousands and ten thousands of youth of either sex and cast down her many thousands even of strong men ; this deceiver, sometimes under the guise of liberty, and sometimes even of philosophy and reason, teaching the young to follow nature, standeth at the corners of the streets, or in the saloons of luxury, and her voice, O ye simple ones, is unto you. Her look is smiling. Her attire is gay and flaunting, and she presents herself,

“Drest to the taste of lustful appetite.”

Her voice is soft and melodious. She has at command the honied accents of persuasion, is mistress of many a plausible and seducing argument, of a thousand fair and beguiling promises. None of the agonies of her heart are visible in her face.

These she conceals beneath the smiles and gayety of that false laughter, in the midst of which the heart is sad. "My name," she says, "is happiness. I have built the fair mansions of delight; with me dwell the joys of independence and liberty, the free indulgence of inclination, fearless revelry and heart-cheering mirth. Religion, conscience, God, eternity, a judgment to come—these are themes unknown to me and my votaries. We leave these matters to fanatics and hypocrites. We are philosophers and our philosophy is to be happy, while we may. To philosophers, belief in one God, in twenty Gods, or no God, is much the same thing. If there be a God, we can not suppose that he would wish to abridge our pleasures. If there be a judgment to come, we do not fear that he will call us to account for gratifying inclinations which he gave us. If there be a heaven, it must be intended for us all to be happy

there together. Come, then, ye who are in the morning of your day and eager to be happy ; come to the mansions of pleasure. For you I have spread my banquet. I have decked my house with tapestry and fine linen of Egypt. The shades of night shall conceal us from every intruding eye. What ! afraid ! held back by conscience and the childish prejudices of the nursery and the church ? Religion is all priest-craft. Morality is a name invented by hypocrites. The only morality we know is to rejoice while we may, and to be happy to-day, come what will to-morrow. Time is flying ; old age is advancing. You will be crippled ere long, and incapable of tasting the delights, which give all its charm to the spring-time of life. Come, then, along with us. The wine is sparkling in the cup. We have crowned our head with roses. The sound of the tabret and the dance shall be heard. The prejudices of your

childhood, the terrors of superstition shall be banished. Religion, if it be a reality, can not contradict nature. The God of nature will not condemn us for following nature.

“What joys have the disciples of religion to compare with ours? See their austerity and gloom. The cross is a fit emblem of their profession. They serve a master who interdicts to his slaves the cup of pleasure. To please him they are taught that they must deny themselves. They rail at us from envy, and in secret sigh for the pleasures, which they have not the courage to taste. Discard, then, your idle fears. Take pleasure while it is within your reach. If there be an eye that seeth in secret, that eye will regard with indulgence the gratification of our natural inclinations and desires.”

Such, and much more like it, is the language of illicit pleasure and her vota-

ries. Parents and the friends of the young have cause to tremble for their safety, when it is considered that the inexperience and innocence of youth is often assailed by language like this. They hear it at the corners of the streets and in the haunts of the idle and profligate in our cities. They are especially exposed to be enticed and drawn away by it, when they first go abroad into the world. And I cannot but fear for the young, when I consider that there is so much unbelief abroad among us. The young catch the language, and adopt the sentiments of their elders. And the lax principles, and the light talk, which they hear, are but too much in unison with the wishes of the youthful heart, in that hurricane season of life, when the passions first awake, and the thirst for pleasure becomes a fever. When they hear religion called in question by fashionable and hoary libertines, and future

retribution, perhaps a future life, doubted or denied, they easily persuade themselves that wisdom and truth must be on the side of pleasure, and that that must be a very good sort of faith, which sets them free from the restraints of conscience, and the terrors of a future judgment. When I consider, moreover, the pernicious examples which the young witness in the mature in years,—in popular public men, and too often in their parents,—the total neglect of domestic discipline, and of religious instruction in so many families among us, and of domestic worship in still more,—the indolent and luxurious habits that for a long time have been making progress in our country, and the prevalence of the palatable doctrine of the dissolute Charles II., that “God will damn no one for taking a little pleasure,” meaning by pleasure, the most unbounded licentiousness;—when in addition to all this, I consider

the ardor and strength of the passions in youth and their vehement cravings for gratification, I cannot but regard the young as encompassed with great and peculiar perils.

Besides and above all is it to be feared that, if the young set at nought religion, and deviate from purity and sobriety of mind in the spring-time of life, the season most favorable for forming the character to habits of virtue and piety, the character never will be so formed. There are, it is true, rare and remarkable instances of recovery from early habits of dissoluteness,—memorable examples of a sincere and permanent, though late return to a sober, righteous and godly life. But the natural effect of time is to harden the heart, to confirm the man in his habits, be they good or bad. Different from those colors produced by art, which fade, as they wax old, moral stains grow deeper by time. The heart of the

early corrupted, of the habitual transgressor, becomes by time more unyieldingly set to do evil. The hue of his character becomes fixed. He is like the Ethiopian in point of permanency of complexion. *Those, on the other hand, who seek me early, says the God of truth, shall find me.* Habits of serious consideration, of piety, and self-control, formed in youth, are almost certain to be permanent. And youth is the season, it cannot be too often repeated, in which habits of some kind or other will certainly take root. The young mind presents the good ground, in which the seeds of every virtuous quality may be sown, with the hope of their ripening into fruit. The heart has not yet been hardened by intercourse with the world. It has not been seared by the fires of unholy passions,—nor chilled and petrified with disappointment, and care, and selfishness. And the experience of every

age testifies, that the manhood and old age, that have been distinguished by virtue and piety, were preceded by a youth of religious sobriety, the early devotion of the heart to God and duty. And God has distinctly declared his will that the young should devote to him the dew and freshness of their youth, in the injunction, to which I have so often referred, requiring his ancient people to bring to his altar for sacrifice the firstlings of the flock, the first flowers of the spring, and the first fruits of the year. So numerous are the reasons, that urge the pleas of religion with peculiar force upon the young,—their danger as exposed to the seductions of illicit pleasure,—the levity and indulgence, with which compliance with these seductions is regarded in fashionable circles,—the corrupt examples and the avowed skepticism of many of their elders,—the false light in which a religious life is regarded by

the unreflecting,—above all, the favorable opportunities, which if neglected in youth, can never be recalled.

My object, at present, is to combat those false and specious arguments of the licentious and dissolute, that theirs is a happier course than that prescribed by religion, which they represent as gloomy and forbidding ; and that there can be no harm, nothing wrong, in gratifying inclinations, which God, or, as they say, nature has given us. And I shall briefly urge in conclusion the solemn admonition to deter the young from sin, with which the text concludes, “ *know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*”

I. First, then ; although the dissolute, the votaries of illicit pleasure, begin by persuading the young that there is no truth in religion,—that their opinion upon the subject is as probable as another ; yet their strong point is, that only in

pleasure, in the unrestrained indulgence of the inclinations and desires, which nature has given us, is happiness to be found, and that religion is altogether a needless discipline of painful self-denial, of rigor, sadness and gloom. I grant that a religious man has none of the ebullitions and transports of that tumultuous revelry of the passions and senses, which resemble the sudden blaze and crackling of thorns upon a cold hearth. Still, it is a willful calumny, a manifest libel upon religion to represent her course as overshadowed with gloom, or as in any respect unfriendly to the innocent joys of youth, to any of the rational pleasures of life. Our Saviour—and his authority none will dispute—has bidden his disciples, even when they fast, still to retain the aspect of cheerfulness and joy,—*to anoint the head and wash the face.* But granting that, from wrong notions of the nature of religion, from mistaken

views of the character of God, there are those who have represented religion as allied to gloom, austerity and sadness, yet even the sadness of the religious man, his contrition and tears convey more real felicity to the secret chambers of the soul, than all the loud and turbulent joys and revelry of the licentious and dissolute. Happiness or misery, we know, is altogether in the hidden recesses of the soul. We well know that the face may wear the aspect of festivity and joy, while the heart is wrung with anguish. In the gayest circles God sees many a bosom throbbing with pain, or oppressed with grief, while the countenance is radiant with smiles. I would admonish the young not to be duped by this deceitful show of happiness, and I would make you sensible, if I could, that a youth, who begins life with reverently remembering his Creator and walking in the way of his holy commandments,—who holds on in

the ways of religion and duty with unfaltering step to the end, has had at his last hour, even if there were no hereafter, a thousand and a thousand times the greatest sum of true enjoyment compared with that of the dissolute man of pleasure, as he is called.

Tell me, ye who have made the experiment, is happiness to be found in scenes of dissipation, in the intoxicating bowl, in the giddy mazes of the midnight dance, in the sounds of the viol and the harp,—in the libidinous jest and the lascivious song, in the harlot smile of tainted beauty, in the maddening mirth and revelry and the impure orgies that are consummated in the concealed haunts of fashionable vice, the crowded hells of licentiousness? Have you found happiness in scenes like these? You well know what a weight of weariness, what a heavy and comfortless gloom hangs over the hours that follow these scenes. You well know, and thousands have ac-

knowledgeed that it is the insupportable dreariness and gloom, the oppressive vacuity of the hours that intervene, which makes the slaves of a life of pleasure, as it is woefully miscalled, impatient and in haste to return to the same revelries only to be rid of thought and of themselves.

But who does not know that happiness is a still and quiet thing,—something that springs up in the heart from hidden sources of refreshment,—

“That peace, which goodness bosoms ever,”

which has its headspring

“Pure in the last recesses of the mind.”

It is a stream that flows gently, but is regular and constant. But the pleasures of the dissolute and licentious are a torrent that foams and rushes rapidly along for a brief space, and then subsides into a dead, stagnant, mephitic pool. Though for a time they afford a tumultuous delight, yet being often repeated they lose

their power to please. Disrelish, apathy, seared affections, an unquiet mind follow in their rear. The heart, having satiated its desires, grows cold, and, like a bankrupt who has exhausted all his resources, shuts itself up in sullen seclusion and disgust towards every thing. It has nothing more to enjoy, having drained the cup of sensual joys to the dregs ; and it is dead to all the pure and hallowed pleasures of virtuous affection, of religious faith, hope and charity. Conceive moreover the early votary of licentious pleasure become prematurely old ; for the dissolute youth, no less than the most virtuous, hopes to live to old age, which sometimes happens to the most depraved. Behold him, then, grown gray in his sins, a dissolute, forlorn old man, living on joylessly without God and without hope. See him tottering with disease and infirmity and *made to possess*, as the Scripture expresses it, *the iniquities of his youth,—*

reeling perhaps with intemperance upon the brink of the grave opening to receive him. Think of him listening to the still, small voice of conscience ; for the near approach of death usually gives a tongue to conscience. How dark and cheerless his reflections ! Will he look back upon the past for comfort ? No ; “that way lies madness.” There he sees only proofs of his folly and his guilt. To what will he look forward ? Will he dwell with complacency upon the pious sentiments, the virtuous habits, the useful knowledge stored up in his youth, and upon the promised rewards of well doing laid up for him in heaven ? Alas, he has no such comforters to console him. Old age comes to him without any of these reliefs, without a single ray of light from heaven to dispel its darkness and to soften its horrors. The clouds that gather over his head ~~are~~ like the approaching glooms of a winter that is to have no end. He sees in retrospect a long track of years,

thick set with marks and memorials of duties neglected, of opportunities unimproved, of time misspent, of vicious appetites indulged, and disorderly passions unchecked, that have warred against his soul, and in prospect that righteous tribunal, before which he must appear to receive according to his deeds. In view of all this, methinks I hear you exclaim, *O, my soul, come not thou into his secret place ; be not thou joined to the assembly of the wicked!*

Would you think that this forlorn victim of early licentiousness, stricken with premature decrepitude, his heart as dark and cold as the grave over which he is trembling, is the same individual, who in his youth with bounding heart and feverish pulse, and reckless hilarity, followed pleasure to her last haunts, draining her circean cup to its bitter sediments, doubting whether there be a God or any life but the present, and

who laughed at the sober and religious, as cheated by priestcraft? Who would think it, that the sin-worn remnants of humanity, the mournful monuments of pollution and despair, with which we sometimes meet, were once the gayest of the gay, the foremost in all the resorts of fashionable amusements and nightly revelings? Who would once have thought that all their gayety would have come to this? Yet so it is, deluded votaries of pleasure, meaning to be blest, ye find yourselves undone. After the first intoxication of your guilty joys is over, your prospect darkens, your downward course grows steeper and more rapid. You lose sight of innocence, virtue, heaven and hope, and you come in the end to be that moving picture of ruin and woe, which I have attempted to describe.

You see, on the contrary, when you see a religious man only the outside. It ought indeed, and we wish it might ever be seen to wear a smile. But the ark of

God, we read, was covered with skins and unadorned without ; yet within was a radiant token of the perpetual presence of God. The heart of a good man, though his countenance may often wear the marks of care and be ruffled by the storms of the world, is nevertheless the sanctuary of peace, and its inmost recesses are always irradiated with faith and hope. There is always to a good mind something unspeakably pleasant in the conscientious discharge of duty. There is a heart-cheering sensation, a delightful feeling of self-approval, of moral elevation, even in self-denials and self-sacrifices, that are prompted and practiced from a sacred regard to the will of God. The pleasures of the religious man are pleasures which God and conscience approve, his joys are joys that refresh without hurt or harm to the soul. He is like the eagle in that, while he stoops to the earth for his necessary food, he never loses sight of

the heavens, which are his native region. Hope leads him on from one duty to another, from strength to strength, always pointing him to his rest and reward in his Father's house in heaven. He is respected even by those who have no sympathy with his principles and hopes, because he walks uprightly, is faithful to his trusts, and conducts himself in all his intercourse with the world, with the consistency and dignity of a man, who is hoping and preparing for a better country even an heavenly. He is beloved by those who are like him, who have drunk into the same spirit with him ; for religion, breathing as it does a spirit of benignity and love, softens the heart, renders it tender and humane, and makes man kind and charitable to man. It makes its disciple a constant and faithful lover or friend, a useful citizen, an affectionate and good husband, parent or child. And when called to rest from his labors, and he

sees his end appraising, he lies down,—not as the irreligious and unbelieving do at the best, to meet death with a reckless indifference or sullen despair, knowing that it cannot be avoided.—but he pours his soul around him in kind counsels and benevolent benedictions, and departs in peace not doubting that he goes to repose in the bosom of blessedness, the bosom of his Father and his God. Such are the brief and prominent outlines of a comparison between the character and issues of a life of early licentiousness and irreligion and a life of early piety and virtue.

II. The second plea or argument of the dissolute in justification of their licentious practices is that there can be no harm, nothing sinful, in gratifying inclinations which God or nature has given us. Much stress, I know, is laid by sensualists upon following nature. And what is nature? Why, with them it is the brute instincts and propensities of the

mere human animal. With them to follow nature is to do whatever appetite prompts. But to this the reply is obvious ; it is nature,—unless they disclaim all distinction between brute and human nature,—it is the prerogative of man's nature to follow reason. It is reason, that constitutes the broad and essential difference between the nature of man and that of the mere animal. Reason is a self-directing, uniform and steady principle. Passion, appetite is blind and reckless, and unless controlled by reason, makes the man a slave to its impulses and cravings, whatever they may be. Vicious, excessive appetite is a disease, that does not belong to man's nature. It is a thing of his own creating. Is the inebriate following nature, when he has so indulged and inflamed his appetite, that there is no resisting its demands, no satisfying its cravings but by excess ? You might as well argue that it is following nature to bite and devour one another in the mad-

ness of anger, because we have weapons to kill and destroy, and because the rage of passion and revenge sometimes prompts men to use them. True, indeed, God has given us passions and appetites, but is it nature to be governed by them? No, surely; for, if you avoid temptation and do not voluntarily indulge and invite incentives to stimulate them, they will never become importunate for gratification. But if you fan the sparks of illicit desire, you may soon raise a flame that you cannot control; and if your innocence and virtue are involved and consumed in the conflagration, you might as well say it is following nature to burn up our houses, because God has given us fire to warm us. Be assured that to follow nature is to follow reason; and reason tells you that in the illicit or excessive indulgence of passion and appetite you are sure to lose health and innocence, understanding and peace of mind, a good name, and the capacity of accomplishing

the ends, for which God has created you with an intelligent and moral nature. It is true, God has given us passions. But He has also given us reason to inform us that irregularity or excess in the indulgence of them is fatal to happiness and usefulness in this life,—conscience to tell us that, if we thus indulge them, we sin against God and our own souls,—and religion to assure us that *for all these things God will bring us into judgment.*

I have not time to meet and reply fully to that ultimate argument of vice and unbelief, that there is nothing certain in religion, that every thing about it is matter of dispute, and that most likely there is nothing after death.


The young of my charge will permit me, as their religious monitor and friend, and wishing, as I do, above all things to see them early walking in the truth, most earnestly and affectionately to caution them against imbibing this dreary and

hopeless sentiment, as false as the father of lies, from whom it originates, and not more false than it is fatal to all true worth and excellence. It is the sure bane of all that is noble, disinterested and god-like in the human character. It will poison the sources of the heart's best affections and happiness. It will take from you the shield of virtue, and leave you with nothing but your own traitorous appetites and passions, with which to meet the assaults of temptation and vice. If it were true, the chief ground for gain-saying and bidding you beware of the seducing language and specious arguments of illicit pleasure and its licentious votaries, would be taken from us. But were it even so, it would nevertheless be a fearful truth for you to hear. Believe it not, for, if all the phenomena of the universe be not a lie, if all without and within the soul of man be not illusion, then be assured it is not true. Every

thing in the analogy of nature, in the providence, as well as the word of God, proclaims a future life and a judgment to come. The very structure and erect aspect of man, viewed in connection with his intellectual and moral powers, strongly intimate that he was not made to perish forever in dust and oblivion with the beasts that perish. Arguments and proofs, which the most acute and learned unbelievers have never been able to refute, have been drawn even from nature. But we have a more sure testimony than these can give. We have in the Christian scriptures the declaration and example of one, commissioned from heaven to bring life and immortality to light, or more properly to *illustrate* by his resurrection and bring down to our senses a future life. He has left us his testimony to this momentous truth, confirmed by evidence the most clear and conclusive, that he spake in the name and by the

authority of the everlasting God. He thus confirms all that was spoken by the long list of divine messengers and prophets that preceded him, and with the rest, the declaration of the text, that *for all these things*, i. e. for all the illicit and debasing pleasures of a licentious youth, — *God will bring you into judgment.* This greatest and last messenger has assured you that *they that have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.* This is the plain unequivocal declaration of that man, whom God has commissioned and qualified to judge the world, *whereof*, says the apostle, *he hath given assurance to all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.* It must be the extreme of rashness and folly to credit the shallow arguments of corrupt and therefore prejudiced men against religion in preference to the words of truth and soberness from him, *who spake as never man spake.*

Let me then urge the young, who hear me, to put away that levity and inconsideration, and to resist every inclination and allurements to the criminal indulgence of those appetites and passions, which in youth expose them to become the easy prey of temptation, the early depraved and abandoned victims of licentious and dissolute habits. On you will depend,—I cannot too often repeat it,—the character of the next generation. On you the friends of virtue, of religion and their country turn their eyes to learn from your early deportment and habits what that generation is to be, whether a seed to seek and serve the God of their fathers, to raise the moral tone and to improve the manners of the age, or a degenerate race, *lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, walking by sight and not by faith, living without God and without hope in the world. Believe, and let the belief sink deep into your young hearts, that

the only sure basis of a virtuous character, of an honorable and happy life, a peaceful death and a blessed immortality, is early piety and sobriety of mind. Take therefore for your guide the instructions of that divine Teacher, who when he beheld the young man, who had kept the commandments from his youth, *loved him*. As his disciples, early devote yourselves to God, each of you addressing to him daily the prayer of the young Israelite of old, "*My Father, be thou the guide of my youth.*" He will receive the offering of your young and pure affections, as he did of old, the first flowers of the spring, the first fruits of the year and the fairest and unblemished firstlings of the flock. Settle  in your minds, as eternal truth, that a religious and pure life is the only safe and happy life,—that, early commencing such a life, the habit of religion, of self-government, and of well-doing will grow into your nature,—that they will thus become

easy and pleasant to you—that by living such a life you will escape those bitter regrets, that heart-wringing remorse,—the shame and fears and doubts, which are ever attendant upon a return to God and duty, after having wandered long in the ways of folly and sin. You will be able to approach God at all times with the confidence, with which dutiful and obedient children approach the presence of a good and wise earthly parent. The Father of your spirits will own and guide and bless you; and you shall go at last to dwell in his heavenly presence with exceeding joy, seeing that you offered to him the dew of your youth, the morning of your day, the noon of your manhood; and not merely the worthless remains of your exhausted strength,—of an enfeebled and decrepid old age. God grant this happiness to the young of my charge for his infinite mercy's sake. AMEN.

DISCOURSE VII.

THE YOUNG EXHORTED TO BE SOBER MINDED.

Titus, ii. 6.—*Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.*

IN whatever light we contemplate the young, whether as the pride and joy of parents, the objects of their tenderest affection and solicitude, or as the hope of their country, who are to determine the character of the coming generation, they are, as they ought to be, to the ministers of religion, to all instructors of youth, the objects of their deepest interest and most vigilant care.

It has been a thousand times observed that the young are to the coming age what spring is to the ensuing year. On you, who are preparing to enter upon the untried paths of life, not only the hopes

and happiness of your parents are suspended ; but to you the eyes of the age, that is passing away, are turned to read in the character which you are forming, in the principles upon which you are beginning to act, and in the habits, which you are bringing with you into the scenes of duty and trial, that are opening before you,—the character of the age which is to follow. In every point of view yours is the period of life for receiving and cherishing all kinds of salutary impressions,—impressions which shall lead you to the formation of right habits, to a wise and discreet regulation of your intercourse with your fellow-men,—impressions, above all, which shall give the coloring to your character and condition during the successive ages of that eternal futurity, to which we are all alike hastening.

Youth is peculiarly the favored time for receiving and cherishing moral and religious impressions. It is so regarded

throughout the Scriptures. Were I to attempt the recital of all the passages, which hold out earnest and affectionate invitations to the young to consecrate their earliest thoughts and affections to God,—to *remember their Creator in the days of their youth*, and all the ample promises of a welcome and cordial reception for those who seek God early,—the gracious assurances that he will be found of them,—that He will remember them, *the kindness of their youth, the love of their espousals*, i. e. their entering into covenant with God to be his obedient, confiding children through life,—and that he will be to such the guide of their youth, their God and portion forever,—I should have to transcribe no inconsiderable portion of the hortatory contents of the Bible. Regarding therefore, the possible influence of religious counsel upon the minds of the young in the happy effect which, by God's blessing, it may produce upon

your forming character and future well being, you will bear, I trust, with your pastor and friend, who remembers that Jesus bade his ministers, *feed his lambs*, if he gives you *line upon line, and precept upon precept*,—if he urges even to threadbare repetition the infinite importance of the principles you early imbibe, of the habits you early form.

Instead of distracting your attention and my own with the great variety of motives, that I might urge upon you to be early sober minded, I shall dwell briefly in this discourse only on the following :

I. , There is enough in life, if you will survey it attentively, and as experience will one day present it to you, to induce early sobriety of mind.

II. Youth is the period of peculiar promise and fitness for forming the habit of mind, or character, which my text bids me exhort you to acquire.

III. The influence and permanence of early formed habits of religious sobriety of mind.

IV. And I shall advert in conclusion to a wide-spread and seductive agency, which operates with a secret but powerful influence to give a bias to the minds of the young the reverse of the religious sobriety I am to recommend.

I. If you could see life, as it is, and as we who have made trial of it see it, the earnest and solemn appeals and exhortations of the Bible, admonishing you of the importance of early cultivating a religious sobriety of mind, would not be needed. Parents and ministers would not need to press so incessantly upon you these appeals and exhortations. The necessity of the serious, religious habit of mind in question would be felt by you with a force, which no words of mine could convey. You would see snares and perils where you now see only paths

strewn with flowers, and leading you, as you dream, to the regions of joy, of security and content. You would see clouds, now concealed from your cheated vision, rising from various points in the horizon ; and you would fly, without any exhortation from your pastor or friends, for shelter and protection from the storms of life to the altar of piety, the ark of religion. You would feel the necessity of early making your refuge in the shadow of the Almighty.

But this view cannot be taken by you. It is part of the inscrutable plan of Providence,—of Him who doeth all things well, though often times darkly to us,—that nothing shall anticipate the gradual teachings of the slow and hard-earned lessons of experience. We, who have been taught these lessons, saw the illusions of life, as you now see them painted by hope. The opening prospect smiled before us, as it now does before you. All

to us, as it now is to you, was illusion, romance and hope. Pleasure and ambition and fortune each beckoned us to their several walks, and we saw not the dangers and toils, none of the hardships, the heart-withering disappointments, bitter regrets and *sore travail of life*, which sad after-experience found out for us in these scenes of illusive show and promise. Perhaps it is well that it should be so. *Perhaps* do I say? It certainly *is* well. It is certainly so arranged in infinite wisdom. If you saw all this painted vision of life before you, as we see it, who have detected the cheat,—could you anticipate but one of a thousand of the cares, conflicts, struggles, disappointments and sorrows, that await you,—I mean only such as are common and inevitable,—it would too early bring over your young and fair brows the sad and misplaced marks of experience and premature acquaintance with life, as it is.

I here lay out of the case the danger of giving way to your passions, the fatal results of wandering widely astray from innocence, from virtue and a good name. I lay out of the case disease and deep sorrow, bereavement and parting with friends, torn from you by the unpitied hand of death. I figure to myself only the common misfortunes, the unavoidable disappointments and ills of life, as they are felt by spirits that have been educated and prepared by the wisest early discipline and self-culture. If you could see all these, as you will one day see them,—I do not say that the view would, or ought to make you gloomy, morose, or unhappy,—I say only that it would leave your religious monitors no occasion for these exhortations, for it would make you sober minded of course. Instead of shrinking with dismay from the great probation, the inevitable conflict before you, you would see, you would feel, the

indispensable necessity of forming early habits of reflection, of fore-thought, of religious sobriety of mind. Such a prospective view would teach you the necessity of looking for help and consolation beyond an arm of flesh,—the necessity of securing the favor, that you may lean with confidence for support and protection upon the strength of the Almighty. We, who have gone before you, see and know that there will be exigencies, and trials, very many and great, in which philosophy with all its boasted resources can do no more than teach you a sullen, desperate, perhaps silent, though in your heart repining submission,—trials, in which nothing but a mind sobered and fortified by early habits of reflection, by early piety and religious trust, can stand you in stead and keep your soul in peace. Hope as you may;—promise yourselves what you will; reach after the painted illusions and chase the rainbow phantoms

of life, as your passions and your imagination may prompt you, the world, the so often-tried experiment of life will be just to you what it has been to the countless millions who have gone before you, as it will be to those who come after. The full view of it, however, as it is and will be, ought to produce, as I have said, neither depression, nor shrinking, nor fear to take its allotments, as they come; but it ought to produce precisely that early seriousness and sobriety of mind, which I am anxious to recommend,—a calm prospective survey of the duties, the exigencies and inevitable trials of life, and the sage purpose of the wise man to provide a shelter, to which you may retreat from the stormy wind and tempest, when they arise. And be assured, there is no shelter but in sobriety of mind and early habits of piety.

II. Yours, again, is a period of peculiar promise and fitness, in which to

acquire these habits. I am aware that these remarks may seem trite,—that this is beaten ground over which you have often traveled before with your parents, instructors or pastor. I am equally aware too that it can never be inculcated upon you too often, that if you ever mean to acquire these habits, if you desire ever to possess sobriety of mind, a religious and virtuous character, youth is the time to make these acquisitions, and to form this character. If you have not resolved and are content to live and to die strangers to the love and peace of God, and never to know any thing of a true religious sobriety of mind, of a deep heart-felt piety, let me urge upon you the importance of commencing your acquaintance with God, the cultivation of pious sentiment, and habits of serious consideration and self-discipline early in life, before the contrary habits of inconsideration and levity, if not of dissolute-

ness and vice, are worn into your nature,—before intercourse with the world shall have hardened your heart,—before examples of irreligion, oblivion of things spiritual and eternal, and confirmed habits of conformity to the maxims and manners of a worldly life shall have given a fixed obliquity to your character,—before your natural tenderness of heart shall be seared and dried up by communion with the frivolous, the selfish and the alienated from God.

The time to be occupied by other reflections forbids my enlarging upon this topic; and I can only, with paternal solicitude and affection, implore of you, to improve the favored time to consecrate the early prime and vigor of your pure affections to God and the highest and only enduring objects and interests of your being, and to yield the sway and bias of your heart, as yet uncontaminated, and the moulding of your character, as yet unformed, to the influences of religious

consideration and sobriety of mind.— Every thing calls and encourages you to this course. Earnest determination and endeavors will now ensure success.— Every thing that you can rationally desire may be easily obtained at this period of life, while the heart is warm, the affections ardent and the character flexible. By and by every thing will be changed. The heart will be filled with the world ; for it must be filled with that or the love of goodness and excellence. The affections will become blighted by the sad finding of what the world really is, of deceived confidences, of disappointed hopes. The character will have acquired the fixed rigidity of habit, and you will have learned the terrible import of that appeal in Scripture ; *can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ? Then may you who are accustomed to do evil learn to do well.* You have a promise too of the most animating encouragement,

the promise of God's peculiar aid and blessing. I need not repeat to you the many passages of Scripture alluded to in the commencement of this discourse, that invite the young to remember and to devote their earliest affections to God. I need not remind you again of the beautiful and significant sacrifice required of God's people of old, the first flowers of the spring, the first fruits of the year, and the fairest firstlings of the flocks without spot or blemish.

It needs none of my feeble efforts to paint the beauty of early piety, how amiable, how dear it renders the young to good men and to God. It needs no argument to show in what light those young persons must appear who, approach God with their affections yet unscathed by the world, all pure and sincere, with hearts ductile as wax, all whose imaginations and wishes are yet innocent and unacquainted with evil, and thus

make to him the acceptable offering of the morning of their existence, the dew of their youth, the freshness and fragrance of their young and unsullied affections. The heart that would not feel the beauty of this offering at the first contemplation of it, would hardly be persuaded to a better appreciation of it by any words of mine. I will only add the paternal and encouraging promise of God to the young; *I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.*

III. To the foregoing considerations let me add once more, that of the known influence, the permanence, I had almost said, the omnipotence, of early habits.—Every one knows that we remember through life the events and incidents of our youth. Every one knows with what delight old men recur to the home scenes, the happy and innocent attachments, the enchanting novelty and freshness of their early days. When the recent events of

their waning life but transiently interest, or impress them,—are all blended, confused, or forgotten,—they love to go back to their spring-time of life,—fondly and vividly to retrace the enjoyments, the occupations and dreams of that happy period, and delightfully to live over the pleasant years of their boyhood and youth. This shows us how strongly every thing is impressed upon the heart and character, that is early stamped upon them, before they are all figured over, underwritten and interscored with deep impressions of the withering and searing cares and interests, disappointments and sorrows, if not the vices of the world.

The stream, that flows constantly in one direction, soon cuts for itself a deep channel. The casual actions or affections of to-day are more easily repeated to-morrow, and repeated again and again become importunate inclinations, which soon grow into habits, and then are iden-

tified with the daily conscious existence, and constitute a part of the moral nature of the agent. Thus early sobriety, early thoughts of God, pious sentiments and dispositions cherished and fostered from day to day, as the young advance in life, will sit easy and natural, and soon be wrought into the texture of the character and strengthened with all the unyielding force of established habit.

And it is a consideration, that ought deeply to impress the minds of parents and of children, that habits of some kind or other must and will be formed. No one can grow up without receiving on the ductile, susceptible heart, either the impress of sobriety, of religious reverence and virtuous manners, or traits of an opposite character. Every young person is receiving the impress of one or the other of these; and the impressions, already made are daily becoming more and more a part of the moral nature,—of the conscious being, of each individual.

How easily do we discover the unwavering steadiness, the unyielding, inflexible uprightness of a man of long-tried and established virtue, that has been always consistent, in constant exercise, and which has been worn as a habit, till it has become, like the countenance or gait, the mark by which we recognize the man even at a distance? And how easily do we detect the assumed, the variable and faltering character of the man of alternate sinning and repenting, of weak resolves and frequent relapses,—the character, i. e. of one, who too late in the day has seen the necessity of habits of sobriety, integrity, religious faith, and a heart that is right with God?

If, then, you who are coming into life to fill the places that are now filled by your elders would bring with you the habits of a religious and virtuous sobriety of mind, and would have these marks and pledges of a character, fitting you for

earth or heaven, sit easy and natural upon you, as much a part of your known and conscious individuality, as your personal shape and features, begin early the formation of such a character. Let your habitual thoughts and affections, meditations and prayers, like the stream, wear for themselves a deep and undeviating channel of religious sobriety, of virtuous resolution and active goodness. Begin early with remembering your Creator, and let a religious sobriety of mind mark your opening character, and neither in youth, in manhood or old age will you forsake God or virtue, nor will God forsake you.

IV. When I think of the temptations that surround you and strongly solicit you to swerve from the course that has been recommended to you, so many present themselves to my view in formidable array, that barely naming them would occupy more time than custom or your

patience would allow to a single discourse. I shall therefore only advert, as I proposed, and that briefly, to a wide-spread and seductive agency, which operates with a secret but powerful influence to give a bias to the minds of the young the reverse of the religious sobriety I would recommend. I refer to the reading, or current literature of the day, the books in fashion and the principles they inculcate. We are become of late years, as every one knows, emphatically a reading people. From childhood to age, from the highest to the lowest condition of life, every one reads. Every one is of course more or less influenced by what is read. The salutary influence of ancient discipline, before the community became a community of readers,—the paramount influence of the pulpit as it once was, has now yielded to a more sweeping, powerful, and though silent yet irresistible influence, that of books, of social or soli-

tary reading. The young are acquiring in their silent vigils and by the midnight lamp, and in their stealthy hours of leisure, those impressions, which at their time of life have, though a secret, yet a mighty efficiency in the formation of character. Books that are universally read have the power to kill and to make alive. To understand this influence, to strive to regulate it aright, as it respects their children, is one of the most solemn duties of intelligent parents, as also of instructors of youth and of the ministers of religion to the young of their charge.

There are, together with an ever accumulating mass of trash, many admirable little books, the well-known works of several distinguished English female writers, and a small number from the pens of our own country women of kindred genius, that may, not only with safety, but with great advantage, be put into the hands of children. And for the age of

early childhood there is perhaps little danger to be apprehended from the deluge of insipid sentimental tales, which of late years have inundated the country,—much less danger than formerly, when the infant mind was misled by monstrous and improbable fictions, or abused by immoral and seductive stories.

The danger now is for that period, when the glowing intellect and fermenting passions of youth begin to develop together. Since the commencement of the present century, a flood of literature of a new character, infinitely more seductive and imposing than any thing that had ever appeared before, and altogether of a character with the other novel aspects of the age, has been poured in upon the reading world, particularly calculated to captivate the young. I need not name the great and gifted masters of the deep and thrilling strains in verse and prose, that are every where in the hands of our

reading youth of either sex. My young auditors comprehend at once the poets and novelists, to whom I refer. I need not point to the empassioned, sublime, enchanting and prostituted muse of the first modern bard, of brief and splendid but portentous career,—inculcating, in the most beautiful verse, unprincipled and reckless licentiousness, misanthropy, doubt and despair cast over all the future;—nor to the softer strains of another, still living, even to gray hairs pouring forth entrancing melody and song, while he touches unhallowed strings, awakening passions, against which innocence and virtue and heaven bid the young resolutely shut the door of their hearts. Nor need I refer to the unrivalled creations of the late mighty magician of Abbotsford, whose hundred volumes are every where seen side by side with those of the poetic prodigies of the age, together painting or singing to the charmed imagination of

their readers, with no ray of that pure and divine light that was brought down from heaven by God's Messiah, with no guiding star in the sky, no recognized hopes pointing beyond the grave, no motives but those drawn from earthly interests, from the animal instincts and appetites, the voluptuous, or dark, but always selfish passions, whose objects are pursued, sometimes with a proud self-glorying magnanimity, but more often with the unrelenting ferocity of a mere brute, physical courage,—with no grand moral, no pervading sentiment of religion, no holy or heavenly principle inculcated or illustrated in any prominent narrative or character, except in "The heart of Midlothian," and the Jewess in *Ivanhoe*.

"What, then," you may ask, "while these books and kindred works are open to all, is to be done? Shall we interdict to the young this fascinating reading?" Not at all. It would be impossible. The

very attempt would only render the books in question more alluring. We may in vain expect either by authority or management, to close the ears of the young to these deep-toned and delightful strains. Should we wish, if we could, to rest their safety in their ignorance of these and similar popular works? By no means. I would inculcate the necessity of carrying to this reading *soberness of mind*. Let the young be instructed and made to comprehend distinctly, that there is a right and a wrong in things independent of all sophistry and the gay rhetoric of wit and unbelief. Let them understand that all is not wrong, which perverted genius can render repulsive or ridiculous, nor all right, which poetry can make fascinating and delightful. Let them carry these seducing pages to the Bible, and measure them by the measure of the sanctuary. Let them bring to the reading of these books minds early imbued with the spirit

of our holy religion, home-taught piety, high principle, a correct moral taste, and then let them read. The bee and the spider settle on the same flower. The one extracts unmixed sweetness, the other unmixed poison, according to the assimilating powers of each. Let then the minds of the young be prepared to extract the sweets and to reject the poison of the popular works of the age. Let them be taught to understand and feel that they have serious duties to perform, labor and suffering to encounter ; that virtue and piety, eternity and heaven are realities ; that a pure mind, virtuous principles, unspotted manners, religious trust and an approving conscience are the only unalienable possessions, the only goods which an intelligent, immortal and accountable being should supremely prize and labor incessantly to secure ;—that it is dangerous to revel long or frequently amidst the enchanting fictions and vision-

ary scenes of the poets and novelists ;—
that over refinement and softness and
luxury,—in holier language, *the lust of
the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of
life are not of the Father, but of the world ;
and the world passeth away, and the lust
thereof ; but he that doeth the will of God,
and none else, abideth forever.*

DISCOURSE VIII.

GOD DESTROYS OUR EARTHLY HOPES TO MAKE US APPRECIATE THE HOPE AND STRIVE TO LIVE AS BECOMES THE HEIRS AND EXPECTANTS OF IMMORTALITY.

“The stars of heaven are shining on,
 Though these frail eyes are dim with tears ;
 The hopes of earth indeed are gone,
 But are not ours, the immortal years.”—J. ROSCOE.

Job. xiv. 19.—*Thou destroyest the hope of man.*

IF we wanted other proofs of the goodness of our Creator than the profusion of his bounties, which we see wherever we turn our eyes, and of which we partake without ceasing, this alone ought to satisfy us, his having so formed us that the kind delusion, hope, attends us through all the vicissitudes, all the vanity and *sore travail of life*, nor quits us when we die.

Could we ascertain with precision the sum of happiness which we have enjoyed from the first moment of prospective thought to the present hour, and the different sources from which this happiness has arisen, it would appear, I believe, that hope has furnished the largest aggregate in the total amount. In the earlier moments of life the promise of a toy, or any, the most trifling novelty, is the object of desire and expectation ; and the child is easily and cheaply blest. In advancing years, the object of hope is still in reality and truth little better than a bauble or a toy. But whatever may be the object, disappointment still follows in the footsteps of hope. No earthly acquisition ever brought with it all the good which it promised at a distance. Yet no number of disappointments can bring us utterly to distrust the sweet flatteries and soothing promises of hope. The expected felicity to ensue from the termination of

some favorite project still furnishes fuel to feed the genial flame and to preserve from extinction the cheering light of hope. Nothing, I repeat, can more strongly evince the goodness of our Maker than that we are so formed, that although from our first acquaintance with life till we quit it in death we experience almost an unbroken succession of disappointments, yet the hope of some promised good, some yet untasted felicity, buoys up our spirits and animates desire and expectation through every adversity and change. Whereas, if our Maker, instead of giving us this propensity to borrow happiness from the future, had formed us rigidly to calculate what the future would be from what we had experienced, we should, before we accomplished half the journey of life, look only for disaster and disappointment on our way, and should perhaps early perish the victims of despair. But such is the nature God has given us that we

hope and are disappointed, yet we still continue to hope. The next day, or week, or year, is to bring some acquisition, to terminate some enterprize, to remove some obstacle, to consummate some connection, to make some change in our condition, when we are to be happy. And so it has been with every day, every week, every year, that is past. And so it is, we are never entirely satisfied with the present, but are always looking forward to something future that is to content us.

Think, for one moment, how deplorable our condition would have been, if God had limited our happiness to the scanty sum of enjoyment from the present, without permitting us to hope for any thing better to come here or hereafter. It would have been like expunging the blessed sun from the firmament of heaven, and leaving the world under the perpetual dominion of polar darkness and frost.

But now, formed as we are, and such being our condition through the bounty of our Creator, we look forward to prospects gilded and painted bright with the rays of the never-setting sun of hope. So have we seen in the west a fairy world of clouds, diversified with variegated landscapes and all imaginable forms of beauty, upon which the descending sun lavishes its evening splendors ; and, as they sail along in floods of gold, their dark sides are gilded with a thousand gorgeous hues. The moment the sun is gone, so also is their gay and splendid coloring. A dark and lurid mass of vapors, instead of the bright and painted vision, is all that is seen. So it is hope sheds its enchanting light upon our distant prospects ; and so dark and gloomy would have been our earthly sojourn, if God had not ordained that hope should gild the path of life, and allure the traveler onward by raising before him, as he advances, bright and

flattering visions of coming felicity, all of her own magic creation and coloring. And thus it is, hope leads us patiently along over the ruggedest ways, and through the darkest scenes of life. As soon as one illusion has vanished, instead of leaving us long to grieve for our disappointment, hope immediately fixes our eager eye, even before the tears are quite dried out of it, upon some other phantom as brilliant and attractive, as the one that charmed and cheated us before. And, as this disappears, another succeeds, and another and another, till *desire fails*, and we quit the illusions of time for the realities of eternity. The man who hopes for more consequence, or notice in the world, looks forward, notwithstanding his repeated rebuffs and disappointments, to some fortunate contingency, which is to confer on him the desired distinction and honor. The man, who sets his heart upon riches, *rises early, goes late to rest,*

and eats the bread of carefulness,—schemes and calculates, and traffics, expecting still, however long his *hope is deferred*, that fortune, in some propitious hour, will pour her profusion into his coffers. The votary of pleasure, notwithstanding he has always found pain treading on the heel of his licentious joys, expects to-morrow to pluck a flower without a thorn. Thus it is the breath of hope every where animates the busy scenes of health, activity and enterprise. Even when the darker dispensations of providence open upon us,—when the illusions of health vanish, and God visits his frail creature in his eager pursuit of the painted shadows, that flit before him, with sickness,—hope, when the visions appropriate to health can no longer allure, raises a new prospect, and beguiles the hours of confinement and the languors of disease with the flattering promise of recovery. How much more

drearily would pass the tedious hours of debility, languishment and pain long protracted, if God had not made this hope of recovery a stronger principle in the human constitution, than that of reason. You shall go to the sick chamber of one whom reason, if left to itself, would surely teach, by a thousand instances of the same disorder, to abandon all hope of recovery; and yet you will find this hope still gladdens the heart and buoys up the spirits of the patient. As the slow and silent but irresistible progress of decay beats down one fortress after another, hope still retreats to some new citadel; and, it is usually the same decisive blow, which severs the thread of life, that at last dispels with it the illusions of hope. It is peculiarly so with the young. They can hardly bring themselves to believe, to realise that they must die, when disease in some mild and gentle form has taken hold of them, however steadily and firmly

it grasps its victims. Hope flatters them from day to day, that the relief which they have not yet found, will come to-morrow ; and, it is not till they have lain down upon their bed for the last time, and they feel the cold hand of death upon them, that they cease to hope.

But is there no other hope, when that of recovery fails ? Yes,—thanks to the Father of our spirits for the unspeakable gift,—when the poor, worn out sufferer is convinced that the hour of dissolution is at hand, there is still another hope, which God hath provided in mercy for all, who will embrace it through faith in his Son, *the promise, which he hath promised us by him, even, life eternal*,—the hope of making a joyful exchange of an earthly, corruptible body, for one that is spiritual, incorruptible and immortal,—the hope of leaving a state of infirmity, sin and sorrow, for a better country even an heavenly, where there shall be *no more death*,

neither sorrow, nor crying, nor any more pain, and God shall wipe away all tears. This last, this glorious hope of eternal life, is the only one that shall not be followed with disappointment, provided we early embrace it, and by patient continuance in well doing steadily aim to live, as the author of this hope hath taught us in his gospel. Hence we see why it is, that the present life is a continued series of disappointments—why it is that God so often *destroys*, as it is said in the text, *the hope of man*.

If God is perfectly good and wise, as well as almighty,—and to doubt it were as irrational, as it would be impious,—and if he had not intended us for another life, a future state of equitable retribution, he would not have subjected us to so many evils,—to so much disappointment and trouble and sorrow here. Every hope, every desire would have been gratified with the enjoyment of its contemplated object, and the current of

life would have flowed on smooth and unruffled to the last. We should have been satisfied with our lot, and wished for nothing more. We should have been like the happy animals, and birds of the air, content with the present, without regret for the past, or apprehension for the future. God would never have held us in painful *bondage through fear of death*. That event would not have been anticipated, as now, with dread, but would have taken place unlooked for and unsuspected by us. And the same moment, which saw us fearless and happy, to the last

“Pleased like the lamb that crops the flow’ry food,
And licks the hand, just rais’d to shed its blood,”

would have put us into non-existence, and beyond the reach of pain forever.

But it is far otherwise with us, and the existing constitution of things is altogether different. Human life exhibits one wide scene of painful regrets and anxious

apprehensions,—full of vanity and vexation of spirit. *Man*, says holy Scripture, *walketh in a vain show* ; he is ever more or less disquieted and sad, restless, discontented, repining, flying from a sense of present dissatisfaction, to new schemes and experiments, as sure to disappoint him, as those he had tried before. Thus God *destroys the hopes of man* in regard to the possessions and objects of this world.

In bringing to pass these repeated disappointments of our earthly hopes,—some of them, God knows, grievous and bitter in the extreme,—no instrument in the hand of Providence is more efficient than the great destroyer, and at the same time, great teacher, death. God sends this messenger into our dwellings, and his coming effectually overthrows to their base the most lofty structures of human pride, of human confidence in earthly possessions and hopes. When called to witness how irretrievably God disappoints

and destroys the hopes of individuals and of families by death,—by taking from friends the objects most beloved on earth,—from parent, the desire of their heart and the delight of their eyes,—by taking away the young, who are the hope of society,—we must have contracted a strange levity of mind, or moral stupidity, if we can see these ravages, and not feel impressed and awed, and *humbled under the mighty hand of God*. Lighter than vanity itself must be the mind and character of those, who can witness the departure of their companions and equals in years, whether cut off suddenly in their full strength and vigor, or doomed to linger through months of debility, of irksome confinement and slow decay,—who can witness the pale countenance, the worn out frame—the last convulsive sigh, and not be awakened to a serious sense of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and to a deep and vigilant solicitude so

to live that their last end may be full of peace and hope.

The number of those, who die in childhood and youth, exceeds the number of those who survive to years of maturity. You have seen a flower, which raised its bright form and opening beauties to the morning sun. Ere the evening you have sought the same flower, and either smitten by a worm at the root, or plucked by some careless and rude hand, you found it had fallen, and its form and beauty faded and withered away. So have we seen the infant, the child, the youth of early promise, full of health and animation, growing up in the morning of life, the delight and hope of parental affection and fostering relatives. And, while yet the freshness and the dews of the morning were upon them, we have seen them smitten by a secret blight in their prime, droop and sicken and wither, like the faded flower, till we have seen them

*borne to their long home, and the mourners going about the streets.**

If God thus *destroyed the hope of man*, merely for the purpose of inflicting disappointment and pain, and for no moral and ulterior ends, we might with reason complain, and in bitterness of soul call in question the mercy and the equity of the divine dispensations. But God does this for far other purposes—for the wisest and most gracious ends. He disappoints our earthly hopes, that we may be incited to grasp with a firmer hold the hope and promise of eternal life. He defeats our plans and cuts off our expectations of earthly happiness, in order that we may feel the necessity of seeking the divine favor, as our chief good, and of thus laying up treasure and placing our hopes in a world, where there are no such changes as are here.

* Preached the Sabbath after the interment of a child and young man of extraordinary beauty and promise.

If God were not thus severely kind,—if he were to gratify all our wishes here, how soon should we contract an invincible attachment to this world? How soon would the thought that we must leave it at last render us completely wretched, whenever it crossed our mind? As it is, we in general, when summoned to leave the world, discover sufficient reluctance to depart, disappointed, harassed, and wearied, as most of us are, that live many years in this scene of discipline and *sore travail which God has given the sons of men to be exercised therewith*. If even now we are so reluctant to depart at the summons of our Maker, how much greater would be our reluctance, did we find nothing here to vex, to disappoint, to afflict, to tire us out and make us long for rest. As things are now arranged by the providence of God, with what different sensations do different classes of men receive the unwelcome messenger, that comes to all? He, who

leaves great possessions, a palace, a crowd of dependents and flatterers, and all the accumulated goods of life, for a narrow and cheerless lodging in the grave, departs,—unless he has learned, as a disciple of the Son of God, to possess all *these things, as though he possessed them not*,—departs, I say, with feelings of reluctance, and regret, very different from those of the poor and worn out laboring man, or homeless wanderer, who has nothing to attach him to life,—nothing to quit but toil, and it may be, a few humble, but kind friends, who will soon follow him,—who has no *goods laid up for many years*, nothing to make him “cast one longing, lingering look behind,” no incumbrance, in short, to throw off but his enfeebled body, and like a tired man, to repose from labor and sorrow in that quiet bourne, *where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.*

Nothing, we should constantly remem-

ber, is ultimate in this world,—all is probationary,—all is preparatory and has reference to another and unseen retributive state. Our whole course here is a school of discipline and trial. Disappointments and sorrows, loss of friends, sickness and pain soon overtake us,—often in the early morning of life, in order to teach us from the first that here is not our rest,—that this world is not our home. A wise and benignant Providence early begins the process, which is intended to prevent or cure us of an undue attachment to life, or an unreasonable reluctance to quit the body, to be present with the Lord. This process God steadily pursues. Our sweetest hopes disappointed, favorite plans of happiness defeated, high raised expectations overthrown, fond affections crossed, early commence our weaning from this world, and teach us, as we count and sigh over our withered joys and vanished

prospects, if we would find permanent satisfaction and peace,—if we would possess something, which can not disappoint us, we must not look for it here in outward things, but by piety and virtue, by conformity to the laws of our being, must prepare ourselves to find it in a better life to come.

From this frequent frustration of our earthly hopes, from the insufficiency, which we find, in the goods of this world to satisfy the cravings of the illimitable mind,—from the consequent dissatisfaction which pursues us to the close of life, and from the known goodness of the Creator, reason alone should teach us, and has taught mankind in every age, to infer that another life awaits us beyond the grave. In the animal creation God has provided for every thing that lives and moves, an adequate gratification of every natural desire,—something suited and corresponding to all its wants.

We, the only race of creatures on earth endowed with a rational and moral nature, and destined to immortality, were not intended to find all that we covet in this world. We eagerly thirst and sigh for permanent and complete happiness, and we feel ourselves incited by the promptings of all the higher principles of our nature to be making continual progress towards the attainment of this happiness. But as our animal nature strongly tends to attach us exclusively to *the things that are seen and temporal*, to the country, in which we are only strangers and sojourners for a season, God sees it necessary oftentimes to disappoint and afflict us,—to take away *the desire of our heart, and the delight of our eyes with a stroke*, in order to set us right, to loosen our attachment to what is frail and perishable, and to fix our affections upon *the things unseen and eternal*, the things above, where Christ, as our forerunner,

hath set down at the right hand of God. For this exalted and gracious end every affliction, which we do not by our own sins and follies bring upon ourselves, is sent by God. And even those distresses which we bring upon ourselves by our sins and follies, take place by the benevolent appointment of God, i. e. are consequences which he has ordained should ensue, in order to wean us from folly and sin. Are we visited with sickness? It is to teach us not to set too high a value upon pleasures, which depend upon our animal nature, and which we can enjoy only in these frail and perishable bodies. Do we eagerly covet some desired object, which we imagine would content us if obtained,—and is it denied us? Or, if obtained, does it disappoint us;—or is it taken from us? All this is but the discipline of our wise and gracious Father in heaven, to teach us that our chief good, the true end of our being, is not to be

found in outward possessions, in the world, or the world's pleasures. Are we bereaved of the objects most dear to us, the children of our love, in whom our heart was bound up,—or the friend that was as our own soul ? Perhaps no other event could so effectually set home upon our mind and heart the divine admonition, *Trust not in man that must die, nor in the son of man, whose breath is in his nostrils; who is as grass, and all his glory as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. And wilt thou set thy heart, says the prophet, upon that which is not ? Make the everlasting God thy trust, and hope continually in him, in whose favor is life, and whose loving kindness is better than life.*

Are you a mourner, my hearer ; and do you say with the prophet, “ *Is there sorrow like unto my sorrow ?* I have seen the ruin of my dearest earthly hopes. The child of my affections, on which my fond-

est expectations rested, is taken away, the prop, on which I had hoped to have leaned in my age, is removed forever." But there is a voice which says to you, as to the widow of Nain, and to Jairus, who were bereaved of their children, *Weep not, for thy child is not dead, but sleepeth.* And it sleeps only to you,—to us in the body; for it is awake and lives to God, as all the departed are alive to him,—are, i. e. living conscious spirits in a spiritual world. *For he is not, says our Lord, a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.*

And who, if he knew his true interest, would repine, that at the heaviest expense, and with a stroke ever so severe, God should strike away those props, which tempt us to lean exclusively upon the frail foundations of this world? Who would wish to be encouraged to build his house upon a basis of sand? Be instructed therefore, by the instability and

uncertain duration of all earthly possessions, to seek a surer basis on which to rear the structure of your hopes. Build it on the Rock of ages,—on the truth, the love, the promise of the everlasting God; and though the winds and the rain, and the floods of earthly calamity and sorrow assail it, yet shall it stand, even when to you the earth is no more, and you shall dwell securely in it during the interminable ages of eternity.

God is the unfailing friend of all those who offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put their trust in him. And who are strong,—who are safe,—who are tranquil in all vicissitudes,—but they who have thus chosen and secured for their patron and protector the Almighty, and ever present God? Acquaint thyself, therefore, with God; and in the day of trouble be at peace. Trust in him, and he shall cause thee to know that it is with a father's love, a father's solicitude

270 A PRESENT FROM A PASTOR.

for the moral, spiritual, immortal welfare
of his children, that he afflicts,—that it is
in mercy he *destroys the hope of man.*

DISCOURSE IX.

THE VOICE OF NATURE IN AUTUMN.*

Psalm 49 : 14.—*And their beauty shall consume in the grave.*

IT is in unison with the voice of the season and the event of the last week, deplored by us all, to call to our remembrance the most serious and affecting of all subjects, the frailty of man, his transient continuance here and the certainty of his destination to the grave. It is especially in harmony with the fading aspect of nature and the mournful images of decay, which meet our eyes on every side when we look abroad upon the autumnal landscape, and which seem to call upon man to reflect, soberly to meditate upon the event, which is the end of all flesh ;—to

* Preached the Sabbath after the sudden death of a young woman of great beauty and accomplishments.

behold in the dying year an emblem of that change, which is to divest each one of us of the body, to convert "this sensible warm motion into a kneaded clod," and to dismiss the undying spirit to God who gave it.

Were we not all deeply and equally interested in this subject, a frequent recurrence to it, merely to produce effect, and, as the aim sometimes seems to be, only to show the power of the preacher to impress his hearers with awe and solemnity by holding up to their contemplation this dark, mysterious and inscrutable change, were, to say the least, a useless, if not a cruel trifling with their feelings ; and to do this often, even with the intrinsic interest, with which the subject of human frailty and mortality must soon or late, come home to every mind that thinks and every heart that feels, could not fail, by rendering it trite and familiar, to weaken its impression and impair its effect, when presented.

As death is an event certain and inevitable, and may be near to some that are young, as well as to the aged, who know that they have not long to live; as it is a theme fitted to awaken a religious awe in the most presumptuous and daring, to inspire the most gay and frivolous with seriousness, and the most thoughtless with consideration; as it is impossible not to wish and intend to live well, while under the solemn impression that we must die and go to give account of ourselves to God; and as the deep and abiding remembrance of this can hardly fail to exert a powerful and salutary influence upon the views, the purposes and conduct, in life, wisdom has been defined by certain philosophers to be "meditation upon death."*

There is a well known order of monks, celebrated for the extreme rigor of their vows, who, dressed in sackcloth,

* See Degerando on Self-Education, p. 422. American translation.

dig their own graves which are never a day out of their sight ; who perform all their labors in silence, in short, all the offices of life ; or, if they speak, when they meet, all they say to each other is, " Brother, we must die." This is certainly a departure from the path, which Providence has marked out for man. For although life is designed to be a constant progressive preparation for death and a retributive eternity, still it is to be life, while it lasts, and not an anticipated and continual death. To have death always before us, always in our thoughts, would destroy or impair some of the most useful and necessary feelings and affections of our nature,—and unfit us for the ordinary and indispensable occupations of life, which are among the essential duties and virtues of our present state. It would render us indifferent to the claims, which society has upon us, and would dissolve the charm of those tender ties and dear affinities of na-

ture, "which make it life to live." Therefore it is, that God has concealed from all the precise moment or day of their death, while he has surrounded us with innumerable memorials and warnings of the coming of this certain event at last. While, then, in [truer accordance, as we think, with the design of Providence, we adopt the motto of a more rational philosophy, "The wise man, looking forward to death, makes the best use of life," let us, with this view, adjusting the tone of our feelings to the farewell song of the birds, to the falling of the yellow leaf, to the solemn prelude to the requiem of the departed year,—let us devote a few moments, this evening, to reflections upon our last end,—upon the certainty that we must all go the way whence there is no return; that we must put off these houses of clay, and appear naked, disembodied spirits, stripped of all outward distinctions, of

every disguise, in our true character before God.

Almost the first lesson, which nature teaches us, is, that man, whose breath is in his nostrils, is born to die. If we look upon the open volume, spread out before us in the visible creation, we see the sentence of decay and dissolution inscribed upon all its productions. One while we see the earth clothed with the young and smiling verdure,—with innumerable tribes of flowers and blossoms breathing odors,—with life and beauty in ten thousand forms. After a few months the whole perishes, and the face of nature is overspread with the fading and sallow hues of decay and death. The trees, which, not long since, we beheld waving their green foliage and expanding blossoms to the vernal breeze, have dropped their matured fruits, and are beginning to be stripped of their faded honors, and to stand naked and leafless, like bereaved parents, mourning

over their fallen and perished offspring. The flower, still more frail, that opened its beauty to the morning sun, and exhaled its fragrance to the gentle winds, has long since lost its form and comeliness, withered and died, like the infant in the prime “and beauty of its innocent age cut off.”

Not only the productions of nature, but the labors of man, the monuments of art and the artizan himself grow old, and in a little time are no more. The hand, that planted the tree, that is now decaying, and that reared the building that is now falling to ruins, has long since mouldered into common dust. The man has rested from his labors, and his works are following him. Thus we can scarcely look upon any object,—upon the smallest space in nature, without encountering the silent, but impressive and solemn admonition, that man and his works are destined to

certain and speedy decay and dissolution. The same lesson, as I have said, is repeated to us alike by the productions of nature and those of art ; and our funeral knell is tolled in our ears by all the countless memorials of the past,—by all the once moving forms of life, that have vanished,—by all the once breathing creatures, that have died,—by all things wrought into shape by human hands, that have been resolved again into their original elements.

In the old world, where once were cities crowded with an immense population,—rich in splendor and magnificence, whose towers and battlements proudly defied the assaults of armies,—nothing now remains but desolation and ruins. We read in holy scripture the names, but cannot now ascertain even the sites, of Babylon, Ninevah, Tyre, and other once flourishing capitals of vast and formidable empires. We read, in the same book, of nations, once powerful and cel-

ebred, who have left no other trace of their existence than the brief notice preserved in these ancient records. They, too, had, no doubt, their cities, like the rest, that rung with the din of industry, and with the notes of gayety and joy, and whose superb dwellings were endeared to their happy tenants by the same domestic affections and pleasures, which make home so delightful to you, who hear me. Ages, in slow and solemn procession, have passed away since these nations, their cities, and palaces and their tenants have been involved in one common ruin and oblivion. Where once the hearts of millions beat high with joy,—where, grouped in smiling families, the busy generation exulted in the sweet consciousness of existence,—buoyant with hope,—calculating upon many years to come,—seeking after wealth, pleasure, honor and a name to live after them,—there the solitary owl now tunes her

nocturnal notes to the melancholy cadence of the winds. The whole scene is a solitude and a desolation. But in the ear of reflection the solemn admonition issues from these ruins, "Soon, O man, wherever, or whoever thou art, shall the places that have known thee, know thee no more forever!"—Thus every work of man passeth away, and man himself is more frail, more perishable and transient than even many of the productions of his own hands.—

While in books we trace the records of history, the thoughts and deeds of men, we are taught the same lesson. We read of kings and their reigns, of heroes and their exploits,—of statesmen and their intrigues,—of wars and conquests,—of revolutions and splended achievements of nations. Interested, and borne along with the narrative by the principle of sympathy in our nature, we see, while we read, the actors and the events

almost passing before our eyes. But when we close the book, and inquire, where are they now ? they are all gone, and given place to new actors, or to vacancy. . They, who once figured and made a noise upon the stage of life, and acted such distinguished parts, are all numbered with the things that were, but are not. Wherever there has been life, there also has been death. Whatever has been, or shall be reared from the bosom of earth, our common mother, has been or will be returned to her bosom again.

Our fathers, the friends we have known and loved,—where are they ? If we look around in the circle of those, whose faces and the tones of whose voice were once familiar and dear to us, how many do we miss ? One after another has dropped almost imperceptibly into the grave. We scarcely thought how many, and how fast they were going,

as they successively departed ; but when we pause to reckon up the number, and count the places of those, that are gone, we are struck with the ravages, that death has made, and wonder how we could be so little impressed by the events, as they passed, so momentous to the departed,—so admonitory to the living.

What, at best, is human life,—this bounded and variously measured period of our being,—in which, those, who attain to manhood, are so full of schemes and projects, hopes and fears,—so aspiring, and so disquieted, if they cannot compass the objects of their aspirings,—if they cannot be rich, distinguished or admired, during the few uncertain and vanishing years allotted them ? The longest life is but threescore years and ten,—or in a privileged few (if indeed it be a privilege) eked out by extraordinary vigor to a score or more beyond. The happiest life is but a succession of

labors and transient joys, of ardent hopes, often blasted, and when possessed, seldom fulfilling half their promise,—its best days marred with trouble and anxiety, and ending in infirmity and pain. Few comparatively reach the goal of three score years and ten. A much greater number seem born only to make their appearance for a day, like the flower, that blooms with the dawn,—looks upon the light, and dies. It is astonishing what multitudes close their career, almost as soon as begun. The advancing ranks grow thinner, as they approach the limits of human existence. A very few attain to what seems to be the natural wish of almost every human heart. They live to old age. In other words, they outlive their friends and associates, who began the journey of life with them. They outlive the manners, those modes of thinking, of speech and action, which are alone pleasing to them. They outlive most of their senses, and often their

reason and memory, and, with a few favored exceptions, with little to enjoy or hope, more than to see with dim eyes, the sun rise and set a few times more. In view of all the ills and infirmities, which so often render even the *strength* of the aged, in the affecting language of scripture, *labor and sorrow*, we are ready to adopt the sentiment of the father of history, "whom the Gods love die young."

Yet, in an existence such as is allotted us here, so short at the best, so uncertain, that we can none of us be sure of to-morrow, and sent here, as we are, for the great and momentous purpose of forming a character, that shall fit us for another, spiritual and eternal world, how many, nevertheless, who survive the period of childhood, find time to sin, to taint the soul with corrupting pleasures, to forget, or to trifle with the high and solemn trust committed to them, that of securing with a diligent and virtuous use

of their time and opportunities, not only their present peace and welfare, but the final approbation of their Maker, who placed them here, and has assured every one, that as he sows here, so also shall he reap in eternity. The consideration therefore of our frailty,—the certainty that we must die and it may be soon and suddenly, ought surely to make and keep us sober, thoughtful, humble and assiduous in doing the work God has given us to do, while the day of life and strength is continued to us, mindful that the night of death may be near, when no man can work. It ought to reduce in us all vain and useless aspirings of pride and vanity—to humble our lofty aims and hopes,—or rather to exalt them from earth to heaven.

To that class of my hearers, upon whom the infection of vanity, of a proud and presumptuous confidence in life, is most apt to fasten, the text speaks with a prophetic and monitory

voice, which has been verified in every passing age, in every circling year, in every village and neighborhood by the death of the hale, the young and the beautiful. To this class, who are buoyant with hope,—dreaming bright dreams of the future,—beguiling themselves with a thousand flattering visions of many and happy years to come, the text utters its warning voice. These “gay dreamers of gay dreams” have not yet learned what life is;—they have yet felt no ebbings in the full and warm tide of existence to remind them of their frailty;—and the instances, they may have witnessed, of their companions and equals in years cut down in life’s green spring, and their pale cold forms in their faded beauty borne away to wither and consume in the grave, have been few and far between, and have soon ceased to impress and admonish them. It is the young, therefore, that most need to have the admonition repeat-

ed to them, from the lips of friendly monitors and from the word of God, that has appropriate counsels for all,—the admonition to remember their frailty, and that they too may be called away in an hour, when they think not, and their body in its freshness and beauty be made a prey to death *to consume in the grave.*

There is one source of vanity in youth, of which sickness and death seem sometimes to be sent in mockery, as if to instruct survivors how precarious and transient a possession they are proud of,—as if to bring derision upon one of the most flattering, most coveted, and often, God knows, most fatal gifts conferred upon youth, that of personal beauty. Here, if we may credit the poet of “Paradise Lost,” was the weak part, the assailable point of our common mother. Her daughters, with few exceptions, and some of her sons of almost questionable sex, have inherited this infirmity. Hence

that solicitude about dress, so disproportioned to their concern about better things;—that absorbing attention to the outward adorning of the person, for which the apostle exhorts the women of his time to substitute the imperishable ornaments of the mind and heart,—the improvement of their rational nature,—the interior graces of a *meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God are of great price*. It is this solicitude to make the most of those outward attractions, which nature has given, that employs so much of the time and thoughts of the young in studying to embellish a form and structure, which the Creator has made beautiful, but which fashion not seldom changes to deformity, which the flight of years will certainly rob of its charms,—which casualty or disease may suddenly reduce to undistinguishable dust. There are few traits in human nature, that furnish more humiliating proof of its vanity and weakness

than the discovery how much this regard to external appearance occupies the attention of every age and sex. You shall often find this regard to have gained such powerful ascendancy over the mind, that you would give far less offence by charging the individual with immorality, than by intimating that you thought the person, the exterior figure and appearance displeasing, or wanting in attraction and grace. So wrong-headed and perverse are we in our estimate of things, that we can bear to hear our dispositions, our morals even, taxed with obliquities and defects, while we resent the slightest hint of deficiency in our understanding or person. Yet what can be more absurd ? For, is not the understanding and person of every one fashioned and dealt to each, as God has been pleased ? Whereas, the dispositions, the moral character and conduct are of every one's own making and fashioning. We

are mortified and repine at defects, which we could neither prevent nor remedy, and are content, nay elated, with qualities of our own creating, of which we have cause to be ashamed before God and man.

To those, who think more of those outward adornings, which add nothing to the intrinsic worth of the subject, than of those imperishable graces of the mind and heart, which look fair to heaven, which make the soul dear to God,—no reflection, one would think, could be more salutary, than that *their beauty* must at last, and may soon be consigned to dust and *consume in the grave*. Its language is, “make not an idol of the form and comeliness, which thy Creator has given thee; — let not its outward adornings engross the time and attention, that should be given to the culture and improvement of the undying spirit that animates it, to the duties and employments, that must prepare

it for meeting its Maker and Judge in peace. Sickness and decay will ere long lay their withering hand upon thy frame and *thy beauty shall consume in the grave.*"

Although to a certain extent, attention to personal appearance is innocent and proper, nay, a duty in all, which, however, must be determined by the circumstances of rank, wealth, or occupation of each individual; yet when it takes off the mind from more important pursuits,—diverts the thoughts from those moral and spiritual concerns, upon which are suspended the soul's everlasting peace and welfare,—when it excludes from the mind all serious and becoming solicitude to be prepared for that event, which must come to all,—it then becomes foolish and sinful, just as every other inordinate affection, or engrossing interest does, which produces a similar effect.

But although all outward distinctions,

whether of beauty, genius, wealth, or rank, cease with life,

“ When man’s frail frame returns to whence it rose,
And mourn’d and mourner lie united in repose,”

and thus, by their brief duration, prove to us of how little consequence they are,—yet, blessed be God, who hath given us the assurance by the resurrection of his son from the dead, there are distinctions, qualities inherent in the soul, that remain forever. While *beauty consumes in the grave*,—while the most admired symmetry of form, and the most perfect assemblage of outward attractions shall cease to be distinguishable from common dust,—while it will soon be of no importance who were the great or the little among men,—or who were the beautiful, or otherwise among women,—the qualities of the mind and heart,—the distinctions of piety and goodness,—the love of God and virtue,—a character modeled after that of the Saviour,—the

moral graces of faith, humility, meekness, patience, charity, purity,—a forgiving, gentle and benevolent spirit,—in a word, the christian temper and character will survive the ruins of the grave,—will survive all the vain and coveted distinctions of earth, even the dissolution of the earth itself, and the vanishing of these visible heavens. These are imperishable goods, the only treasures we can take with us when we die ; death can not despoil us of these ; and it is the possession of these that makes the poor rich,—rich towards God,—rich for eternity.

To have remembered and obeyed our Creator in the days of our youth,—to have formed an early acquaintance with the sacred Scriptures, *which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through the faith which is by Christ Jesus*,—to have been dutiful, grateful, and obedient to our parents, kind and affectionate to brothers

and sisters in our youth, if our youth were blest with these relatives,—to have been friendly, courteous and obliging in all our intercourse with our associates and equals in years, and in all our transactions with men ; to have been industrious, and useful in the station in which Providence has placed us ; to have learned from the teachings and example of Jesus how to live and how to die, and to have aimed in humble and devout reliance upon God's help to reduce to practice what we have learned, and to adorn the doctrine of our Saviour by a life conformed to the plain rules of duty in the New Testament,—to have done these things, and to possess such a character, as the doing of these things implies, is infinitely better than to have been distinguished among the celebrated for genius, or rank, or wealth, or beauty, or fashion, or any or all endowments or possessions, which we must leave when

our body returns to the dust, and our spirit to God who gave it. To have done these things according to the measure of our capacity and opportunities, and the number of our days, is to have answered the ends of our existence in time, and to have secured that good part, which shall not be taken away from us.

“Col. Pickering was in the continental army through the war; and was sometime Adjutant General and Quarter Master General of that Army. Under the federal government, he was one while Post Master General;—then Secretary of War,—then Secretary of State of the United States. He was afterwards a Representative and a Senator in Congress. For two or three years he was a member of the Supreme Executive of Massachusetts. Few men were so much in the public service as Col. Pickering.—From 1774 to 1820, there were but few years when he was not in some important office. He died poor, but with an honorable fame, as a true patriot and an incorruptible public officer. He had habits of great industry, and often labored on his farm several hours in the day after he was seventy-five. Mr. Pickering died in 1829, at the age of eighty-three.”—
[*Dr. Bradford's Biographical Notices of Distinguished Men in New England.*]

DISCOURSE X.

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

"The Secretary stood alone. Modern degeneracy had not reached him."

Deuteronomy, xxxiv : 7. *His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.*

STANDING here for the first time since the decease of the distinguished servant of his country, and his God, who for many years was a constant worshiper in this house, I hope it will not be deemed unseasonable or obtrusive, if, waiving the topics ordinarily selected for the theme of discourse on occasions like the present,* I indulge myself in the grateful,

* The State Fast.

though mournful satisfaction of recalling to remembrance some of the prominent and distinctive excellencies of that great and good man, and in giving utterance to some of the exulting recollections, patriotic sentiments and cheering anticipations associated with the history and name of him, whom, while living, we all delighted to honor, and whose memory, now that he has gone, we love to cherish and can never cease to revere.

We come here at all times to contemplate and admire together the perfections of the Divinity, as manifested in his works, in the wonderful operations and gifts of his providence and to meditate upon our dependence and obligations, as his creatures. It cannot therefore be out of place in this house and on this day, dedicated to religious consideration and serious reflection upon our individual, social and civil relations and duties, to recognize the most glorious display of the divine attributes,

as exhibited in the human mind, when pre-eminently endowed with wisdom and virtue,—that mind, which *the Creator has made to be an image of his own eternity*, and which, when showing forth its brightness and its strength and its purity in the useful, honorable, active and prolonged life of an able public servant and *an honest man*, is justly regarded, as “the noblest work of God.”

When a child my father taught me to honor and revere the men, who planned and achieved the independence of our country; and among the first names of New England worthies, I learned to reverence that of Colonel Pickering. I had figured to myself as embodied in him, all the stern and unbending virtues of a Roman citizen in Rome's best days, when I knew him only by reputation, and by his public acts and writings. When it was my better fortune to know him, as he appeared in the free and unrestrained

intercourse of social and domestic life, it was delightful to find the softenings of benevolence and the attractions of cheerful and affectionate manners shedding a mild and mellow lustre over the severer features of the image, I had formed to myself of the intrepid soldier and inflexible senator.

Little worthy of the subject, as I am sensible, must be any tribute, that I can offer to the memory of the venerated sage and patriot, and justly and eloquently, as his character has been already depicted by the faithful and appropriate organ* of your veneration and regrets, I am nevertheless impelled to express my sense of the rare virtues and worth of the man, from a deep feeling of what I owe to his public services in common with the whole American people, and still more from a grateful recollection of the many happy

* Rev. C. W. Upham, Pastor of the Church in which Colonel Pickering worshiped.

and improving hours. I have enjoyed, in common with others who hear me, in listening to the wise, instructive and entertaining discourse of the faithful chronicler, familiar companion and friend. If men, who have been traffickers in flattery through life, find flatterers to eulogize them after they are dead, it is surely meet that the venerable old man, who spoke only the truth in his life, should find many who will delight to pronounce his eulogy by speaking only truth of him, now he is gone.

Col. Pickering belonged to a race of remarkable men, formed by the peculiar circumstances of the age, in which they entered upon the scenes of active life. Comparing the present generation of statesmen, politicians and patriots,—if we ought to use the word, since the meaning is so changed,—with the public men of that period, we may well say in view of our political degeneracy, *in those*

days there were giants in the land. When we recollect in what a mighty and perilous enterprize they engaged, and with what means they accomplished so great a work, we may say of every one of the master spirits, who conducted that enterprize in the senate and in the field, with more truth than the men from whom we borrow the expression, *thou wast worth ten thousand of us.*

It is great occasions, that make great men. And such was the era of the American revolution. It is in such awakening emergencies, in such spirit stirring times, that in all countries and in all periods of history, men spring up and are brought into notice, and oftentimes from the undistinguished mass of the people, who, but for these extraordinary emergencies would have held on the equal tenor of their way undistinguished and unknown,—men, formed and fitted for instruments to accomplish the divine pur-

poses in bringing to pass important changes and revolutions, which lay anew the foundations of society, and re-model the institutions of a nation,—men, endowed with qualities, that fit them to guide the whirlwind and direct the storm of revolution,—men, who act as efficient levers, by which the ancient systems of ignorance, superstition, and oppression are overturned to be replaced by a better order of things.

And let us remark here, that this view of the acting of providence, not only shows how admirably divine wisdom adapts means to ends, but it teaches us respect for our race,—teaches us that talents, and intelligence and high powers and gifted minds are not confined to a class, to a walk, to the upper sphere. It shows us that the distributions of providence are dealt out with an impartial hand,—that, as the poet has so beautifully said of gems, that sparkle in the unfathomed depths of ocean, and roses that

blush unseen in the desert, there are powerful and gifted minds, that never scintillate or glow in the view of their fellow-men, until what we erroneously call chance, or circumstances bring them forth to burn and shine, to enlighten and to bless in the view of their admiring contemporaries and oft-times to make their influence felt, and their deeds to be remembered by all future generations.

The infancy of Col. Pickering and his compeers of the revolution was rocked, if I may so speak, in the cradle of independence. While he was a child and till he became a man to take part in them, discussions respecting the rights and the duties of the colonies, and those of the crown and parliament were warmly agitated. The chains, that the parent country had long suffered to sit lightly upon these remote subjects of the crown, began to be felt as an unnecessary and galling burden by the wearers. The foolish and wicked attempt of parliament to rivet them by taxation

was the signal for throwing them off. The people, who had worn them loyally almost without perceiving it, the instant the claim was set up to assess their property without their consent, felt the iron enter into their soul. The claims of prescription, of divine right and hereditary power, that had been acquiesced in, unquestioned for ages, were thoroughly examined and understood, and the warrant of the claimants to enforce them was contested.

This was just the contest to rouse the spirit of independence in such minds as those of Col. Pickering and the men with whom he acted, and to call forth all their energies in asserting and defending their rights. Honest, disinterested, and upright men, as they are ever most prompt to acknowledge and accord to others their just rights, so are they ever most determined and fearless in defending their own. And when these rights

are at stake, infringed, or endangered, they make no compromise with private interest, or personal risk in maintaining and securing them. In waging the holy war of liberty against oppression, they fear God, and they fear nothing else.

Providence raised up in Col. Pickering and his associates in counsel and in arms, just such men as the exigencies of the arduous struggle required,—men, who united in the same individual the two characters of statesman and soldier,—men, who like the builders, that repaired the temple in Jerusalem, with one hand wrought in the rearing of the social edifice, and held in the other a weapon for its defence. There was, indeed, no want of heroic and intrepid men to wield the sword,—men strong to accomplish what others planned,—ready to put forth all their energies in the high places of the field, in the deadly breach, and the fury of battle,—men, who, when it was called

for, poured out their blood like water. Your recollection can not fail to call up a long array of honored names of fallen heroes, and defenders of their country,—some of whom jeopardized their lives on the plains and heights by our seaboard, some in the distant frontiers, some mingling their blood with the ocean wave, all fighting or falling where the needs of the country and the cause required the presence and the arm of the brave and the mighty. We their children, who have entered into their labors, and have received from them so goodly a heritage, the price of their toils and their blood, will not forget them. We will teach such lessons to our children, as shall prompt them to make their earliest pilgrimage to the high places of the field, where they fell, to pour the grateful tear and offer the pure incense of admiring and patriotic emulation over the hallowed spot, where their martyred dust reposes.

But they were greater men, and entitled to a richer meed of glory, and of gratitude from posterity, who tempered and wielded these instruments of resistance ; who with “ such large discourse and capability of godlike reason ” looked calmly down through the vista of future years, and foresaw the results of their plans in the generations to come,—who, by an enlarged and prophetic calculation, wisely modeled and matured schemes and systems of government, whose bearings and effects will go on increasing for ages, and continue to produce improvement and happiness to the remotest posterity.

Though Col. Pickering ranked high in the estimation of Washington for his military capacity and skill, yet it is not upon his services in the field, efficient and important, as they were, that his claims are chiefly founded to the veneration of his countrymen and of posterity. The spirit of a warrior, the genius of a

conqueror is nothing strange to find in a good or a bad cause. Common ambition, the natural workings of pride and selfishness, in short, the common operation of the most common feelings of our nature, where they find an aspiring mind, decision of character and physical courage favored by circumstances, will produce Alexanders and Cæsars, Cromwells and Napoleons, Wellingtons and Jacksons. Though Colonel Pickering was a brave and active officer, and spared himself from no fatigue or exposure in the discharge of the duties that belonged to him in the several important offices, which he held in the army from the commencement to the close of the revolutionary war, yet, as he has been often heard to affirm, he had no passion for military fame, no taste for what one of the ancients calls, "the transports of battle."* It was pure love of country,

* "Gaudia certaminis."

his strong sense of duty, that made him a soldier, and not the vanity of command, or the dazzling meteor of military glory. While he, like many of his associates in arms, retained through life his military title, he will be remembered, not for his military achievements, but for his civil services and virtues.

As a devoted and disinterested patriot, a wise and incorruptible statesman and legislator, he will stand forth distinguished in that long array,—at the head of which Washington will stand while the world shall stand,—of those determined, calm, thinking, high minded and heroic men, whom providence raised up and brought on the stage, during our revolution, to prove to mankind, as it would seem, that in the plan of the great Ruler of the world, that revolution was no common event, and was destined to have more than a common bearing upon the fortunes and condition of our race. We are witnesses, that it has produced a new

era in the political history of the civilized world. And we are sanguine in our belief, that it will gradually bring about an entire change in the political condition of man over all the earth. We infer this, not only from what has already taken place, but from the principle, to which I have adverted, that the instrument is selected and fitted to the use, that is to be made of it.—We trust, it is no improper pride, that induces us to believe, that no revolution, that has been recorded in history, has produced an equal number with that, which secured our independence, of calm, disinterested and deep thinking minds, of great and patriotic men, whose ambition prompted them only to deeds of virtuous glory.

Though it is always delightful to dwell upon this topic, so grateful to our national feelings, yet we have neither the wish, nor the capacity to anticipate, the holiest and sublimest duty of the historian.

We leave to him, who at some, we trust, no distant day, shall be raised up and qualified for the arduous and honorable office of dispensing the due portion of renown, and assigning the appropriate place in history, to that numerous host of sages, warriors and legislators, who in their respective ranks and separate departments, so nobly co-operated in bringing stones, with which to build up the great temple of freedom.

Our thoughts and affections are naturally drawn towards the venerable image of one of the most remarkable of these worthies, whom we have familiarly known, with whom we have conversed much and often,—of whose virtues we have all been witnesses, who lived among us a model of unaffected simplicity and godly sincerity, uniting rare endowments and extensive knowledge, the experience of a patriarch and the wisdom of a sage with a modesty, that seemed uncon-

scious, that he differed at all from other men ; who had been associated with the highest in station and dignity, a counselor with the first in council, yet, in his deportment, seeming to forget that he had ever stood higher than the humblest of us,—who came up in company with us to the house of God and bowed in reverential worship with his brethren, an example to all of the devout respect due to the public institutions of religion, as he was of its practical requisitions in *whatsoever things are just, true, honest, pure and of good report* ;—who listened with a meek and candid docility to the ministers of Christ and expositors of christian truth and duty, as though he were a learner of what they often felt he was much more competent to teach than they ; —who cultivated with his own hands the soil, which he had aided in council and fought by the side of Washington to defend ;—who left the cabinet and the

hall of legislation to guide the plough, and returned from guiding the plough to assist in guiding the councils of the nation ;—whom we have seen to the last active and interested in all that concerned the welfare of his country and his kind ;—who was spared to a good old age, to stand, it would seem, for the inspection of a new generation, as a select specimen of the chosen race, the peculiar people, whom God ordained, as he did Moses of old, to conduct an oppressed nation to liberty and independence ; who, like that patriarch, enjoyed, as a reward of his singular activity and temperance, an immunity from the ordinary effects of time,—for at the age of 83 *his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated* ; and after only a short illness was called to join the patriots, legislators, sages, and good men that *have feared God and worked righteousness of every nation*, who have gone before him to their rest and reward.

The grave has now passed its hallowing influence over him, and he is removed beyond the reach and above the prejudiced and misdeeming comments of human passions. In the great constellation of bright and clear and lofty minds, that have shed their radiance upon our country since we became a nation, this last and late setting luminary of New England, has been distinguished by the peculiar purity of its light, and the undeviating uniformity and directness of its course, to the last ; while some others that rose higher, have moved in paths eccentric, retrograde, oblique, sometimes in opposition and sometimes in conjunction, as they were influenced by the attraction of place and power.

Col. Pickering, as he acted always from principle, was always the same, and all knew where to find him. They had only to look along the straight line of truth and honor and disinterest-

edness and duty, and they were sure to trace the luminous track, he had marked out for himself; and from which no bribe of interest or power could seduce, no frown of official anger, no menace of popular clamor could move him knowingly to deviate. In those times, which tried men's souls, when they had to choose between a government yet to be formed, and one, to which they were bound by habit, and by associations like those which attach the child to the parent, but which had then begun to exact the submission of slaves, by introducing into its legislative acts a principle of invidious and oppressive distinction between its subjects here and those at home, Col. Pickering made his choice at once, and, as it has been said, against the current of his filial feelings, and the remonstrances of relatives, whom he revered. He was in those times, looked up to with entire confidence, by his fel-

low citizens in this section, as the leader of their councils, and the organ of their sentiments. His disinterestedness and superiority to all selfish views were manifested in the outset of his political course, and were uniformly in accordance with the well known reply of his to the citizens of Boston, that the citizens of Salem were incapable of enriching themselves by taking advantage of the privations inflicted by parliament upon their suffering brethren of the metropolis. He sought the common good and not his private weal in all the responsible trusts confided to him, and in all the measures he proposed or advocated, till his dismissal by the second president from the head of the state department, when he returned once more to the rank of a private citizen, with no other remuneration than the consciousness of having done his duty, affording

an illustration of the fine sentiment of the poet ;

“ And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels
“ Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.”

For myself, I should deem myself richer in tracing my descent from one, who, like him, spent his best days in the service of his country, and came from that service with clean though empty hands, than to some titled lord, who left me heir of millions acquired at the public expense.—“ It is,” says lord Bacon, “ a poor center of man's actions, himself. It is right earth ; for that only stands fast upon its own center ; whereas, all things, that have affinity with the heavens, move upon the center of another, which they benefit.”

Col. Pickering, I have said, held on his way to the last in the same direct line of rectitude, truth and honesty ; and such an example of political integrity is of inestimable value to the people

of a republic, like ours, who need some such standard of public virtue to refer to, as a common measure of character or desert in public men. Certain it is, that after his dismissal from the department of state, he was left to walk comparatively alone, deserted by most of the men, who were zealous and efficient fellow workers with him through the long struggle for independence. All indeed acted in concert while the common prize was at stake. When it was won, the difference of character in the agents began to manifest itself in the division and distribution of the sovereignty acquired. When loosed from the old sovereign beyond the seas, a new sovereign, the people, was to be conciliated. Cut off from the old fountain of honors, of place and power, the new one was to be managed by those, who aspired to the dignities and emoluments, issuing from it. Here commenced the two grand po-

litical divisions of the country under distinctive names,—those, who acted with the same disinterested regard to the public welfare, with which they set out from the first, and who had the confidence of the people at the time ; and those, who coveted that confidence exclusively for themselves. Hence the charge of a leaning to England and a desire to introduce monarchy brought against the former by the latter, in order to detach the confidence of the people from their true friends and to transfer it to those, who avowed themselves the only genuine republicans and haters of monarchy. Hence all the futile attempts from that time to the present to give something like plausibility to the charge. We allude to these matters simply to show, that the inflexible political integrity of Col. Pickering was the result of his moral integrity,—that his patriotism rested upon the immovable basis of his private

virtues, and was disinterested in all its views and in all the measures which it prompted him to propose, as well as in all those proceeding from others, which it led him to advocate or incited him to oppose. He feared a base act, a compromise of conscience with expediency, more than he feared poverty or death.—

It is well known, that Col. Pickering and the friends, with whom he was associated in the administration of government till it fell into other hands, became afterwards a sort of proscribed class in the country. Desertion from this class was for a long time the only path to office. Political integrity was thus put to a test, which distinguished the genuine from the spurious. In such circumstances according to lord Bacon, “whoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption.” Instances there were, not a few, of desertion

to the party in power. They had what Col. Pickering, and a bright catalogue of names, that will stand inscribed in history upon the same scroll with his, had not,—but what the leaders of the party in power had from the beginning, and what lord Bacon calls “wisdom for a man’s self.” “They are men,” as he describes them “that hold credit with their masters,”—these may be sovereign princes, or the sovereign people,—“because their study is but to please them, and profit themselves.” He adds that, “this wisdom is in many branches thereof a depraved thing ; it is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house sometime before it fall ; it is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger, who digged and made room for him ; it is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears, when they would devour.” How remote from all affinity to this species of wisdom was the ingenuous, trans-

parent plainness of dealing, as well as of speech, and almost faulty indifference to private advantage, that marked the character of Col. Pickering, is known to every one. With the elder Cato, whom in several points he resembled, he thought it better to do well, though he missed the reward here, than to do evil and escape the present punishment of evil doing. He indeed enjoyed a nobler reward than all the outward distinctions and advantages, that were ever conferred upon its most successful votaries by that selfish wisdom of which I have spoken, and to which he was so greatly superior. He found in the esteem of the wise and good and in his own self respect and consciousness of upright intentions, an inward recompense and a peace, that the world could neither give nor take away.

He approached as nearly perhaps as human infirmity permits, to that state of moral elevation and dignity, of which

that profound observer of the true sources of happiness, so often cited, has said that it "is certainly heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth." And of what this great man adds in the same paragraph the character of Col. Pickering furnishes a striking illustration, as contrasted with that of some of his distinguished contemporaries. "It will be acknowledged, even by those who practice it not, that clear round dealing is the honor of man's nature, and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver; which may make the metal work the better, but it debaseth it; for these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly and not upon the feet." It is only for mercenary purposes, let it be observed, that the precious metals are made "to work the better" when

debased by a mixture of alloy. For sterling value, for strength, for beauty and durability, they will be found to be in their best estate, when unadulterated and pure. And such was the venerable patriot and sage of Essex, whose character was stamped with the clear impress of all the distinguishing virtues of the puritans, without their alloy, united with all the liberality of sentiment and enlargement of views, which have marked their more enlightened descendants upon the spot, where they first landed, where he was born and died, and will be remembered, as one of the most illustrious of their posterity.

Future generations will doubtless group the eminent men of our republic and name together those, who were distinguished from the rest by prominent qualities, and virtues of peculiar and kindred excellence. For disinterestedness, for dispassionate coolness, and

soundness of judgment, for scrupulous regard to truth and equity, for inflexible integrity, for singular purity of motive and fidelity in serving their country, Washington, Jay, Marshall, and Pickering will form a class by themselves. Many others of more brilliant powers and more illustrious fame for their writings, their eloquence, or political sagacity, will figure together upon another perhaps more splendid page of the historian. Yet as time shall travel on towards the consummation of all things, it will drop by the way the name and memory of one and another of the principal actors in the great drama of our revolution. But the name and distinctive character of Pickering will be preserved and go down with unfading lustre to "the last syllable of recorded time," in company with those of Aristides, the Catos, Cincinnatus, Alfred, Washington, and a few more, whose virtue made them

great and memorable, by shedding about them a light, that outshines, and will forever outshine the splendors of genius and station. And when only the calumniated name of Federalism shall be known,—when, like some ancient temple, which offers to the researches of the antiquary only some of the more solid and massy remains, its proportions and grandeur shall be inferred from a survey of such pillars and ornaments of the original fabric, as Washington, Marshall, Jay and Pickering,—it will need no other vindication of the principles on which it was based,—no better eulogy of the probity and patriotism of its founders and supporters.

For the rest, let every youthful aspirant after fame be reminded by the example, we have been contemplating, that the only true glory is that which follows in the train of high-principled, active, unswerving virtue. For fame, true fame,—

328 A PRESENT FROM A PASTOR.

such alone as the good man, who is gone to his immortal reward, desired and sought, as he would now say to each of us in the words of the poet,—to the young men of his country especially,—might his perfected spirit address us from the bright abode of his rest,—

“ Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistening foil,
Set off to th’ world, nor in broad rumor lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
And perfect witness of *th’ all-seeing Judge*;
As He pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.”

